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To

CHRISTIANS EVERYWHERE

WHO HAVE LIVED, ARE
LIVING, AND WILL LIVE
IN AN EXPERIENCE AND
EXPRESSION OF CHRISTIAN
BROTHERHOOD

CONTENTS

I. The Blight of Denominationalism 1

II. Denominational Christianity at a Discount in the Eyes of an Intelligent World . . 20

III. The Awkwardness of Denominationalism in the Face of Equality of Christians Before God 47

IV. There is no Alternative: Church History Must be Rewritten 81

V. The Hurt to Christianity Through Denominational "Voices" 104

VI. Can the World be Christianized by a Denominational Christianity? 136

VII. What is the Hope for Cure of this Scandal? 173

4665 East Anaheim Street
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" Why So Many Kinds of Churches and All Worshipin' the Same God? "

A FOREWORD

" I have been takin' you to funerals for many years and I wonder if you would do me a favor this mornin'," apologetically spoke the chauffeur as he opened the automobile door for my attendance upon another funeral. When I assured him that I would be glad to serve him, he proceeded, " Well, I am a Catholic and I have been havin' some trouble lately, so I thought I would like to talk to you and maybe you could help me a little." He told his story as briefly as the time allowed. It was a difficult situation about which to give advice, but I did the best I could, and by his words of appreciation and the lighting up of his countenance he appeared to be helped.

Then with an Irish go-easy turn of conversation he said, " There is another matter I

would like to mention. Maybe it is none of my business, but for years I have been drivin' people to funerals every day — sometimes it is a Catholic funeral, sometimes it is a Methodist funeral or a Baptist or Episcopalian or some other kind of denomination — and, drivin' along, I often think to myself, Why are there so many kinds of churches and all worshipin' the same God? They go separate roads, but they all find their way to the grave. Now this separate road business don't strike me to be right. It certainly ain't goin' to be so in heaven, if heaven is a place of peace and happiness. I have been wantin' for a long time to ask you why it is that we can't get together here in this world. It seems to me it would please Christ, who died for us all, and, at the same time, it would be a more natural way for us to live."

The question raised by my Catholic chauffeur friend is coming from all classes of people in all the languages of the world. Denominationalism has become wearisome. Many within the churches, and many without definite

church relationships, are haunted by the unreality of worship. Multitudes are slowly turning away from the churches. In the following pages a frank and honest effort is made to lay upon the hearts of Christians everywhere the necessity of abandoning denominationalism.

These pages are written earnestly — humbly, in the consciousness of the largeness of their mission. There is only one cure for the scandal of denominationalism. The cure rests with that great body of Christians, in and out of the denominations, the world over. *The cure lies in Christians getting together in an experience and expression of actual universal brotherhood.*

Ten Hills,
Baltimore, Md.

I

The Blight of Denominationalism

The greatest scandal of civilization is that Christians have not learned how to behave toward each other. I go to be a guest in the home of a gentleman. He puts his best room at my disposal. He cordially invites me to a seat in his dining room. He serves me to the best on his table. We frankly discuss such topics of the day as have to do with politics, economics, industry, literature, and whatnot, sometimes dissenting in opinions, but always with courtesy. I feel the tie of comradeship.

But when I mention the church, whether it has to do with my taking membership without conforming to his interpretation, or speaking from his pulpit, or observing with him the Lord's Supper, or claiming oneness with his group, he rudely denies some one of these to me solely because I am not of his denomina-

tion, although, like him, I am a Christian. The scandal of misbehavior among Christians is supplemented by some groups claiming a monopoly both on heaven and hell, to which claim a credulous multitude adheres.

This attitude of mind cannot be said to be pagan because pagans like Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, and Socrates behaved better toward those from whom they differed theologically. If we would go to paganism for a parallel it must be to a lower grade of paganism and, at the same time, we must not be afraid to ask, Does a person on becoming a Christian raise or lower his attitude of behavior toward other Christians? The asking of this question almost wrenches modern Christianity from its kinship with the Christianity of Christ, but the question is pertinent and cannot be avoided.

Half of Christendom is not on speaking terms with the other half, separated by ignorance, suspicion, and fear. Whatever else this condition may reveal it certainly is not Christian. But the denominationalist consoles himself that these conditions are matters of con-

science, oblivious to the fact that Christian conscience has been bred largely in the hothouse of an unhealthy and biased theology. He tells me conscientiously that the issue is whether we are following Christ or men, he, of course, following Christ and I, in his judgment, following men, if I dissent from him. There you are — two hundred or so different Christs — a kind of polygamous deity, showing special favoritism when his other brides are not around. A philosophy like this naturally breeds misbehavior in Christian conduct, because it is a denial of the fundamental principle of Christian love and, therefore, approaches infidelity.

Take a fine social soul whose contacts are natural and cordial with all. Train him in a denominational system and he comes out more or less biased, in some instances tragically so, depending somewhat upon the rigidity of the system. Had he been born under another denominational system or had he chosen another denominational system for his training, he would perhaps have been less biased, depend-

ing both upon the responsiveness of his conscience and the rigidity of the system.

Every denominational system, always small and provincial, however large the denomination may be, necessarily sets the soul off plumb. The test of Christianity is not in adoring Christ by many prayers nor in preaching Christ, proclaiming him "very God of very God," but rather in showing that the behavior of Christians among themselves in the common everyday affairs of life is superior to the behavior of non-Christians among themselves — not merely outward behavior, but an outward behavior that is the expression of the heart's spiritual attitude.

To what degree this misbehavior among Christians is responsible for the increasing crime of the world is one of the most pertinent questions of the day and a question which cannot be discussed with any degree of frankness without involving the whole church. Instead of having set itself to abolish the poverty of the world, in order that all might have a chance for fellowship, and instead of making brother-

hood the normal tie between nations, races, and classes, in order that all might have a chance for spiritual growth, the church has largely spent its time conserving its denominationalism.

Thus there has been given an abnormal growth to a Christianity which found its climax through twenty centuries in the bitter fruit of the World War — a war which afforded Christianity the most spectacular display of its false interpretation of religion. For this war was conducted by Christian emperors, Christian kings, and Christian presidents, advised by Christian cabinets, Christian parliaments, Christian assemblies, and Christian congresses, led by Christian generals, fought by Christian soldiers, with Christian chaplains, and supported by Christian churches throughout the world in the greatest instance in human history of international lying and wholesale murder. Every moral standard was left lying in the dust and Christianity stalked forth as a skeleton of forms, deaf to the moral and social crimes of the world, but holding in its grip the denomina-

tional peculiarities of more than two hundred parties in Christendom.

The World War made clear in one great dramatic revelation that the denominational church had lost its way. It must ever remain as the climax of the denominational church, which has been more sensitive to forms, ceremonies, and traditions than to the religion of Jesus. Practically the whole church was involved in the World War, with so few of us dissenting that, when occasionally one was sent to a Christian prison by a Christian court of a Christian nation and others were publicly condemned by the Christian conscience of the Christian community, it was hardly noticed amid this gorgeous Christian festival of bloodshed and disaster. The human sacrifices of Christians upon Christian altars exceeded, by many millions, the dribbling sacrifices of children upon the altar of Moloch, whose name is the most abhorred among the deities of the past.

Still ministers of the Prince of Peace, prelates, and church leaders extol the moral aims

of this most immoral Christian carnival in history, being held in the grip of that worldly philosophy of denominationalism, which is so well interpreted by Machiavelli and Nietzsche, in opposition to all that Jesus taught. This is not the place for a lengthy discussion of world crime, but the question necessarily bulks in the lame functioning of a denominational church in the midst of the world's poverty and the world's expensive and terrible mechanisms of settling disputes by human slaughter.

It must be borne in mind that the whole church believes in God, in Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit, and in the Scriptures. Whatever is below these is in the field of possible differences, and in this field Christians have roamed to the scandal of Christianity. The scandal has not been in differing over these secondary matters, for there must always be diversity of opinion in any permanent unity, but the scandal has been in making the differences occasions for unbecoming behavior of one group of Christians toward another group of Christians.

The question of the right or wrong of these different denominational positions is not raised here other than to say that they must be tested by results in common behavior among Christians. This test of discipleship cannot be avoided by substituting theological or ecclesiastical tests without approaching the denial of Christ, which, in many instances, the results from these tests have most rudely done.

If anyone's denominational position separates him from other Christians, or forbids other Christians to join his church unless they conform to his interpretations, or forbids them to come to the Lord's Supper because they are not of the same denomination, or denies oneness of a Christian of another group with his group, there is something wrong in that attitude because it is shot through with prohibitions against other Christians. The denominationalist may seek for an excuse in his behavior by quoting such Scripture passages as warn one against having fellowship with those who have departed from the truth.

But this raises several questions: Who

dares to say, without betraying a biased conscience, that those who believe in God, in Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit, and in the Scriptures have departed from the truth because some of their interpretations differ from our own? Are we sure that it is impossible that our interpretations may be wrong rather than theirs? Even if the interpretations differ, are these differences of such character as to make one un-Christian in his attitude toward other Christians?

Does the fact that a Christian does violence to the principles of love and truth, by his attitude of the Pharisee, awaken no alarm in his own soul? And by what moral right do we assume to sit in judgment with an attitude of rudeness and unlove instead of courtesy and love, if we assume to be judges? And, further, is it not the highest and the first test that the one who loves his fellow Christian most in all attitudes of behavior, irrespective of differences, is more likely to be the better interpreter of Christ than he who sets up prohibitions against other Christians or withdraws from

other Christians in the attitude of denominational superiority?

Let it be understood in using the term denomination it is done with no discourtesy to those communions that discard that term as applied to themselves; but, in this instance, it is used for convenience as applicable to all the parties in Christendom — Eastern Orthodox, Catholics, Anglicans, Protestants, and others. Without entering into any argument it is assumed that it is a generally recognized fact that the church of Christ is divided into many parties or denominations, with all grades of relationship from some degree of decency to impassable barriers. It is not necessary to go into the origin of any of these. The first fact is that the denominations exist and the second fact is that they have never learned how to behave toward each other.

Therefore, for the good of mankind and for the honor of Christ, it is maintained in these pages that Christianity must be cured of its denominationalism in order for Christians to abolish their scandal of misbehavior by sub-

stituting those attitudes that make for proper conduct.

Denominationalism has become respectable and respectability hides a multitude of sins. Heroic struggles are in all denominational histories. These struggles take on a degree of sanctity, depending somewhat upon their intensity and age. Every step of progress in a denomination increases its respectability. Persons boast of their membership in this or that denomination as though superiority over other denominations gives them some merited sense of respectability.

These denominationalists are as proud of their particular denominational affiliation as persons in the southern states, prior to 1860, were proud of their ownership of slaves. Slaveholding was respectable and, therefore, the incongruity of citizens of a democracy being the owners of negro men and women was largely hid from their eyes. But, in the course of time, slavery in the southern states was abolished, and that abolition came unfortunately by the severe wrench of one of the

bloodiest wars of modern times. Denominationalism, likewise, has got to be abolished, but its abolition must come by those evolutionary processes that are already in progress, for it would be impossible to come by severe controversy, which is another phase of war and which would tend toward hard and fast separations rather than toward understanding and fellowship. Human slavery and denominationalism have many parallels. We have outlived one; we have got to outlive the other.

Quarrels of a thousand years ago, or of four hundred years ago, or of two hundred years ago, or of one hundred years ago, are still on. Walk down the streets of any city, especially around public squares, and read the names on the church buildings, or go into the towns and villages or on the foreign mission fields, and those long-ago quarrels among Christians are still evident. Every denominational name is the label of a quarrel and in many instances is perpetuated in great sacrifice to the glory of God!

The Saturday newspaper is as notorious

for its regular weekly advertisement to the world that the church of Christ is still quarreling as the Sunday newspaper is for its advertisement of bargain sales. It is not the question as to whether there are few or many denominations advertised, any more than whether southern slaveholders advertised in the daily newspapers for one or half a dozen runaway slaves. It is the fact of the advertisement that arrests attention. In justice to my own soul I cannot read these advertisements every week, as much involved in them as I necessarily am, but I do read them about half a dozen times a year. Then there come ringing into my ears those awakening words of Bossuet: "Great God! Is it possible that upon the same matters and same questions, so many multiplied acts, so many divisions and different confessions of faith are necessary? . . . These variations fill us with astonishment." [1]

But earlier than he, Paul labeled the

[1] Bossuet, *History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches*, Vol. I.

divided church as a worldly institution. He says:

"Brothers, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ I beg of you all to drop these party-cries. There must be no cliques among you; you must regain your common temper and attitude. For Chloe's people inform me that you are quarreling. By 'quarreling' I mean that each of you has his party-cry, 'I belong to Paul,' 'And I to Apollos,' 'And I to Cephas,' 'And I to Christ.' Has Christ been parceled out? Was it Paul who was crucified for you? Was it in Paul's name that you were baptized? . . . I could not discuss things with you, my brothers, as spiritual persons; I had to address you as worldlings, as mere babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not with solid food. You were not able for solid food, and you are not able even now; you are still worldly. For with jealousy and quarrels in your midst, are you not worldly, are you not behaving like ordinary men? When one cries, 'I belong to Paul,' and another, 'I belong to Apollos,' what are you but men of the world? Who is

Apollos? Who is Paul? They are simply used by God to give you faith, each as the Lord assigns his task.

I did the planting, Apollos did the watering,
but it was God who made the seed grow.
So neither planter nor waterer counts,
but God alone who makes the seed grow." [2]

In place of the four persons around whom the denominations at Corinth centered, write the names of any four of the present day denominations, and it makes Paul's writing up-to-date. My own denomination, having taken the name "Disciples of Christ" or "Christians," would fit well into the fourth designation with any three denominations preceding it, as, for instance, Catholic, Episcopalian, and Presbyterian, or Lutheran, Baptist, and Methodist, or any others. Not a single denomination is excused, but all are under severe indictment by Paul. If one seeks to justify the existence of his denomination it must not be forgot that

[2] I Cor. 1:10–13, 3:1–7 (Moffatt's translation).

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so did those who took the names of Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and Christ.

There can be no justification for denominationalism, even if there were no precedent in the early church against it, because its existence is contrary to the laws of life and, therefore, it conforms to the laws of death. Denominationalism is a scandal. It is a blight upon the whole world. Any attempts for its justification may be placed by the side of arguments for human slavery or for any other misbehavior of mankind. If it continues Christianity will pass from the earth and die like the religions of the ancient world, " born of a need, nourished upon death, die day by day of life, and finally lapse again into the eternal crucible." [3]

The church can be finely educated, have great buildings, enormous sums of money, vast crowds of people, and hold the place of high prestige, and yet miss the whole purpose of its existence, which is to release the spiritual possibilities of mankind for growth to " the

[3] Charles Guignebert, *Christianity, Past and Present.*

stature of the fullness of Christ." The church has not kept pace with the progress of the world. Spiritual adventure is little beyond where it was in the days of primitive Christianity.

This stunted growth in spiritual life is due largely to denominationalism. A child is at a lifetime disadvantage if it grows up in a home which is broken by quarrels and divorce. How much more is spiritual growth — a more delicate plant than child life — stunted and disfigured by a divided and denominational church! There have been, and there still are, individuals here and there, in all denominations, who, in spite of these difficulties, have lived Christian lives. But we must be unafraid to face the fact that the church as an organization is not a spiritual institution. Multitudes in all denominations are being haunted by the unreality in the experience of present day Christianity. A denomination must necessarily be absorbed in its denominational peculiarities at the expense of obscuring Christ.

A church cannot be "worldly" and "spiritual" at the same time. It cannot be "ordinary," and, at the same time, extraordinary. Denominationalism is as deadening to spirituality, on one hand, as is the denial of Jesus Christ in the redemption of the world, on the other hand. They are counterparts of each other and therefore they are artificial and abnormal. Truth cannot be imprisoned by a denomination. It is the privilege of a Christian to have preferences, but not exclusions. The one test of discipleship which Jesus left for all ages was inclusiveness, expressed in the term *love*. A denominational church, being "worldly" and "ordinary," cannot stand the test of Scripture, of natural law, of common behavior, nor of the world's demand for something better than "worldly."

It is therefore not only not impossible to cure Christianity of its denominationalism, but these times register a decided interest in the unifying of the Christian forces of the world, with examples to that end springing out of many denominations in all parts of the world.

These pages are written with no idea of blazing the way to a united Christendom; the way has already been blazed. But the purpose of this volume is to gather up the attitudes, outlooks, prayers, adventures, and possibilities of many in various denominations for the reasonable consideration of all.

II

Denominational Christianity at a Discount in the Eyes of an Intelligent World

That there is a woeful deficiency in our contacts with God is everywhere evident. If it were confined to some one country or some one church it would be less difficult to meet. But it is in all countries — America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. It is likewise in all churches — Catholic, Protestant, and others. It is not a matter of education; the pulpit and pew are better educated now than at any time in the history of Christianity. It is not a matter of money; the financial resources of the church are enormous. But there is a feverish activity throughout Christendom. Denominational Christianity is at a discount in the eyes of an intelligent world. Its various structures are standing like tottering walls. We can keep on going as we are, with beautiful buildings, vast sums of money, and great numbers taking

membership, but none of these things contribute to the solution of the deficiency of our contacts with God. In fact, these things rather complicate the situation. The church lacks spiritual power.

We are at a place where something must be done. The church is involved in a crisis not unlike that in the days of the Renaissance or the Reformation. It is another evidence of God's activity in the world, for every crisis is an expression of his activity. There are threatening perils on every side. We may meet them wisely or unwisely. If we would meet them wisely there must come a radical change in attitude and spirit — not a violent change, but a change so radical that there will be definite processes in action for the abandoning of present day denominationalism for the Christianity of Christ. If this is not done, I am convinced, as Bishop Gore says, " the younger among us must prepare to find themselves in a world which, in great part, has revolted from Christianity — from real Christianity as well as from what is conventional and from its

moral principles as well as from its intellectual dogmas." [1] Truth and error will be wrecked together. It is a grave situation both for ourselves and for those who shall follow us.

The ideal of the church is a personal discipleship around Jesus Christ, all being members of the family of God on earth. In abandoning the flesh, he promised his Spirit to his followers as the abiding guide, making Christianity a religion of the Spirit. And afterwards Paul said, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." The evidence of Christ's being alive and the fulfillment of his promise is dependent upon the expression of his Spirit in the lives of his followers to-day. If there is no one in the world who has the Spirit of Christ, as Gandhi inferred after his repeated experiences in attending Christian churches in South Africa, Christ might as well have been a myth; if the Spirit is obscured in the lives of his followers, Christ is obscured to that degree in the eyes of the world; if the Spirit is revealing in the lives of

[1] Charles Gore, *Christ and Society.*

his followers, Christ is only a revealing factor to the degree of his followers' revelations of his Spirit.

The ideal of discipleship is a brotherhood of personalities trying to conquer hate, pride, and falsehood by the practice of trust, humility, and truth. Faith does not shy at the cross so long as trust, humility, and truth are not apart from personality. Does he trust others? Is he humble? Does he interpret truth in terms of behavior and character? The affirmative answer to these questions is evidence of the understanding of a better social existence.

We are imperfect human beings. The nearer we approach Christ the greater the sense of our imperfections. My heart smites me daily in consequence of my own imperfections. I am not offended when others remind me of them, only it is more evident what my conscience affirms. I wish I were beyond where I am. In my inner self is a constant struggle between what I am and what I ought to be. I feel that it is only a reasonable urge that I and my brethren of all churches ought

to be beyond where we are in our common discipleship of Jesus — not perfect, but adopting "the ever-enduring process of perfecting, maturing, refining" [2] by making our idealism sufficiently realistic as to be interpreted in terms of the Living Christ. Paul says:

"I do not say that I have already won the race or have already reached perfection. But I am pressing on, striving to lay hold of the prize for which also Christ has laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not imagine that I have yet laid hold of it. But this one thing I do — forgetting everything which is past and stretching forward to what lies in front of me, with my eyes fixed on the goal I push on to secure the prize of God's heavenward call in Christ Jesus." [3]

I will not so involve Christ as to have him come down to my standard by my contentment with myself and my brethren of all churches. I and they must cultivate that idealism that shall take us out of this unspiritual

[2] John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy.*
[3] Phil. 3:12–14 (Weymouth's translation).

atmosphere of denominationalism, with its broken brotherhoods, with its faith put into definitions instead of into life, and with its love largely lost in the scramble of our denominational rivalry. Nothing could have happened that would have so severely impaired our contacts with God as denominationalism among the followers of Jesus. It has wronged the Spirit, weakened the words of Christ, made false the testimony of the church, compromised truth, imprisoned our trust of one another, and reduced prayer to a form.

Is there a God? Where is he? Does he care? Is there any reality in the approaches we make toward God? Is Christianity a superstition like those superstitions among the Romans when they worshiped Jupiter and Juno or among the Egyptians when they worshiped Osiris and Isis? What is Christianity? Where is Christianity? Is Jesus a passing figure like Buddha or Mohammed? The attempted answers are drowned in the discordant echoes of denominationalism or in the boisterousness of the crime wave that

sweeps around the world or in the dull indifference of the multitudes who are slowly turning away from the church because of its unbrotherly attitudes. We are facing facts and these facts reveal that something is radically wrong. Of course we can answer, as many do answer, " Our church is serving Christ according to his revealed truth and it is none of our business what other churches are doing "; or we can say it in this way: " Others may be right and others may be wrong; we are right and cannot be wrong." But these answers are the offspring of denominationalism, biased, more or less, by ignorance, hate, and pride. They confirm the infidelity of the world and get us nowhere.

In abandoning denominationalism for the Christianity of Christ, it must be understood that we are not thinking in terms of theological unity. It is, however, not an unimportant field for study, but theological unity is not our present day approach. As Canon Streeter says, " If there *is* to be a theology at all, it is of the first importance that it should be one which is

not out of touch with the science and the philosophy, the criticism and the scholarship of the age." [4] But we are concerned in a religious unity which shall be an actual brotherhood of believers in Jesus Christ, bound together, not by signed concordats, but by such an understanding and appreciation of each other as will make brotherhood real. Here is the test of Christianity. Is it true? Will it work?

The greatest lesson coming from the scientific adventures of these times is the possibility of spiritual adventures. Of all fields it is the most urgent for exploration. Every Christian must begin with himself, then with his denomination, and eventually include the whole church of Christ. It is almost a daily occurrence for adventurers in science to be hurt or lose their lives. They get a tremendous kick out of what they are doing. What is our religion if we do not likewise get a kick out of it? Our adventures in Christian brotherhood may mean such minor hurts as loss of reputation or

[4] B. H. Streeter, *Restatement and Reunion.*

loss of position, for, in most instances, it will involve going beyond the accustomed boundaries of one's denomination, sometimes as far away from one's accustomed paths as the aviator's flights to distant continents.

When a young minister wrote me, asking advice on some adventure in Christian brotherhood, I wrote back, "Can you stand it? If you can, go ahead." How else can adventures be made? It would be interesting if a denomination brought to trial one of its members for practicing Christian brotherhood. And yet it is not altogether unlikely that, under different phrasing, denominationalism would do that very thing, for its history has revealed, at times, a savagery equal to that of political tyrants. The tragedy of the church is its timidity. Adventures frequently have been held back by anathemas of denominationalism in the name of God!

The struggle of the spirit to be free in order to be itself is one of the most painful roads over which the mind travels for its normal contacts with God and with our fellow

men. Spiritual growth is dependent upon wholeness in action and that spirituality functions best only when it identifies itself with the welfare of all the brethren, including all Christendom. In mutual help we cannot think of complete happiness until all are happy, any more than we can think of perfection until all are perfect. He who values the merits of others and in their pleasure takes joy even as though it were his own, has already laid hold upon those forces that give both happiness and perfection. There is a vicarious element in all our approaches toward brotherhood and, as Hocking says, "Vicariousness of mind is wholly necessary to happiness; ensuring the widest scope of that idea-world whereby all things must be appreciated that are appreciated." [5] This includes a revaluation in our own eyes of the things of others and, at the same time, a revaluation of our own things.

But the vicarious principle is not enough for the healing of divisions. In the lead is the

[5] W. E. Hocking, *The Meaning of God in Human Experience.*

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divine Cross Bearer and discipleship follows after him. In his presence the foundation of action expresses itself in cross bearing, which is not merely the stern measure of the discipline of the imperfect; but, in fellowship with the Cross of Christ, "Christian religious feeling has given birth to a religious intuition profounder and more vital than any to be found in the whole history of religion." [6]

All experimentation may not succeed. There will be many failures. It is so in the world of science. Why should it not be so in the world of religion? But trust must be disimprisoned to go upon its errand, going through the whole church from every Christian, like currents of electricity from a common battery. There are many instances of fine fellowship among Protestants, although, in other instances, it falls down rather badly. But take the more remote contacts like those between Protestants and Catholics. Both are deficient in their practices of brotherhood and

[6] Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy.*

yet both need each other. When we think of a reunited Christendom, it would be an incomplete union without Catholics who, in time, must modify their untenable and ungracious attitude, saying that they are the true and only church and none of the other churches are churches of Christ at all. The fact is that it is not true and the better spirited among them know that it is not true.

Protestants must trust Catholics and Catholics must trust Protestants. It is not a matter of choice; it is a matter of necessity. The love of Christ compels it. I must not only trust Catholics, but I must go a step further. I must defend them when they are attacked by such Protestant organizations as the Ku Klux Klan and other anti-Catholic movements. It seems to me too that if any denomination is attacked in my presence I must go to its defense — not necessarily defending its denominational system, but the individuals that compose the denomination, whether the denomination attacked be Catholic, Baptist, Episcopalian, Mennonite, or whatnot. I

would like to have others treat my denomination in the same way.

Then I must do for others what I would like to have others do for me. The law of reciprocity suffers if it is not done. I must offer myself for fellowship with all who have received Christ into their fellowship, for my route to other Christians must be through the heart of Christ. I must know no other pathway. If I fail in winning this fellowship, I must maintain the attitude of deferred victory, for reciprocity never "broods over wrongs." It must be willing to stand rebuffs in its own household as well as in the households of others.

It is equally obligatory for Catholics to make approaches to Protestants. It is a question of maintaining friendly approaches on the part of both, which is truly Christian, or of maintaining attitudes of suspicion and fear, which is thoroughly anti-Christian. It is about time that both groups were ashamed. We have nothing to lose by acting decently toward each other and everything to gain, as is the case with all other groups of Christians. As an

amateur in adventures in Christian fellowship with those nearest to me, as well as those furthest away, I have found a richer fellowship than I carried. There is more brotherhood in the world than we have measured. If, in the approaches between Protestants and Catholics, one or the other or both lose out, so that trust is misunderstood or taken advantage of, — and that is altogether possible in an imperfect world, — is our spirit of adventure so superficial that we would be unwilling to try again? Or have we lost the passion to suffer for Christ's sake?

It is only in the practice of this principle that the standard of Christ can be removed from its obscurity into the clear light of the world. Truth is at its best when it is measured by the falsehood of the world, as it was in the days of primitive Christianity. In every instance it is strengthened and becomes more powerful. But truth in the hands of one group of Christians against another group of Christians holds its place with difficulty, if it holds it at all. In the presence of theological passion

and prejudice it works disadvantageously, usually becoming biased and frequently passing into untruth. The New Testament in the hands of a denominationalist is not the same book as it was when its separate parts came from the pen of those early disciples. The denominational spirit narrows all of its interpretations, one denomination emphasizing this, another that, and still another emphasizing something else, cutting to pieces the New Testament with the scissors of prejudice and arraying certain passages against certain other passages. This has been one of the chief contributions to the infidelity of the world. It is this injury to truth by denominationalism that must be repaired.

Protestants are making approaches to each other, so that nearly all of the Protestant denominations are directly or indirectly in some kind of friendly approach. A most important factor is that "the reunion movement has changed the direction of Protestantism," according to Dr. James Moffatt, "giving expression to its long obscured, but never quite

repudiated, catholicity and world mission, and revealed in it as the heir, not only of primitive Christianity, but of that freer Latin Christianity, which the papacy suppressed." [7]

Not until there is a united Protestantism, however, have we a sufficiently strong ideal to measure at the round table with the strong ideal embodied in the Catholic system. The only way to a mutual understanding of these two systems, both powerfully entrenched in the thought of the world, is by open-minded observation, unprejudiced comparison, friendly experimentation, and cordial fellowship. Then and not until then can the past, as interpreted by Catholics, and the present, as interpreted by Protestants, find their supplementary adjustments. Neither the past nor the present can be abandoned in any move to mold a united Christendom. If Protestants and Catholics cannot unite into a world brotherhood Christianity is terribly impaired. But

[7] James Moffatt, quoting J. T. McNeill in *The Hibbert Journal*, 1927.

when union does come it will be by the adventures of an actual, positive, living Christianity. In the practice of an unhesitating fellowship among the followers of Jesus, we gradually strengthen our contacts with God.

Like the field of brotherhood the field of prayer is equally romantic when it bears the spirit of detachment. The two great commandments emphasized by Jesus may be compressed into the two words "prayer," and "love," the former having to do with our approaches to God — "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" — and the latter having to do with our approaches to our brethren — "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." We cannot think of God and ourselves as the two great realities in the universe without thinking of some method of communication between him and us, but we are faced at once with the difficulty of making that communication a reality in our experience. Dr. William Adams Brown says, "Prayer is the name

we give to the practice of the Presence of God." [8] Are we prepared to practice that Presence? In its bewilderment the human mind is crying for God. Long ago, in like bewilderment, one said:

"Oh that I knew where I might find him!
That I might come even to his seat!
I would set my cause in order before him,
And fill my mouth with arguments."

But our inner self is as undiscovered as our pathway to God. The adventure in exploration is both within and without, or, to use another phrase, God is in us seeking to bring to our discovery the revelation of both himself and the possibility of our experience with himself. "The divinely appointed means of God's self-revelation," says Dr. Otto, "where experienced and appraised as such — 'the Word,' 'the Spirit,' 'the Person of Christ,' — become that to which the man 'flees,' in which he finds refuge, and in which he 'locks' him-

[8] William Adams Brown, *The Life of Prayer in a World of Science.*

self, in order that, consecrated and cleansed of his 'profaneness' thereby, he may come into the presence of Holiness itself." [9] Communication, therefore, is established between God and man. "Every prayer is an idea of God seeking expression in the human soul to make us want what God wants us to be." [10] It is his method of changing us Godward, so that we will not be primarily concerned with things, to which level prayer so frequently drops, but our first concern must have to do with attitudes, spirit, and purposes. When we have sought diligently for these, things will take care of themselves. This is what Jesus meant when he said, "Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

There is nothing so delicate in the universe as our approaches to God. We cannot use prayer like we use the telephone, which this busy age so constantly seeks to do, but we must give time to the splendor of God and the

[9] Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy.*
[10] Peter Ainslie, *The Way of Prayer.*

contacts of our soul with that splendor of infinite mystery. If one plants a seed and takes it up every day to see if it has sprouted, he will injure the possibility of its sprouting if he does not kill whatever life there is within the seed. The seed must remain quiet. It is so with the soul in prayer. It must remain perfectly quiet — not, however, in mere passivity, but the mind working in its reach after God.

Silence is the symbol of surrender. The Psalmist cried, "Be still, and know that I am God," or, as Tersteegen puts it: "God is present, let all in us be silent." The vital thing is the listening attitude — not in audible words but the impact of the Living Spirit upon our spirits. This must have been the experience of Amos when he said, "The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" What God says to us is more important than what we say to him, in order that we may find God's point of view of the church and its denominationalism in the midst of the world and its sorrows. When we see with little less imperfect vision

the entanglement of the church in its denominationalism and its ultimate possibilities, we will be better prepared to make our adventures in brotherhood and prayer.

The path of fellowship is through prayer. It has in it the permanent spiritual basis. Christ said more in prayer about the unity of his followers than he ever said in public discourse. So long as we keep the order reversed there will be uncertain progress in curing Christianity of its denominationalism. Corporate prayer is the method of understanding and fellowship. When four or five persons, each representing a different denomination, have met together in prayer, taking with them the fact that Christ is in their midst, as he said he would be, it is likely that they will go away much closer together than if they had spent the same time discussing their differences or their agreements.

Corporate prayer is the path to permanent fellowship — not necessarily the only path, but the path of abundant hope. It establishes comradeship between personalities, mak-

ing for oneness in will, faith, and purpose. If, however, one discovers aversion toward praying with a Christian of another denomination, or feels unfree in doing so, he is, to say the least, self-condemned, if not involved in moral insincerity, which Jesus frequently and severely condemned in the ecclesiastics of his time.

On the other hand, prayer for one's denomination at the exclusion of other denominations raises the question of one's moral right to take one's judgments to God in favoritism, or in condemnation of God's children. I heard a good and scholarly man in his prayer say, "O Lord, look with special favor upon our denomination and make it strong in the earth, that it may prosper at home and abroad and be a perpetual witness to those doctrines that are dear to our hearts," to which all the brethren present gave a hearty "Amen."

I first raise the question as to whether this is a prayer at all, and then as to whether, if "human slavery" or some other social injustice had been substituted for the word "de-

nomination" it would have been regarded as a prayer in that same group. Perhaps it might be classed with the prayer of the man who went to the temple to pray and said, "Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men." Anyway, I found myself trying to fit it in to some of Paul's experiences, and so I wrote this prayer for Paul: "O Lord, look with special favor upon that little group in Corinth who have taken my name and make them strong in the earth, that they may prosper in Corinth and wherever else they may go, and may they be a perpetual witness for those doctrines upon which I differ with Cephas and Apollos."

Had Paul and the early disciples had that attitude and spirit they would have wrecked Christianity in the first century. Is it any wonder then that denominationalism, with this attitude and spirit through the centuries, has so weakened our contacts with God that the church of Christ is discounted around the world and reveals a leanness in spiritual experience which has characterized our worship

in all lands? Is it a prayer at all if one prays for his denomination and leaves the other two hundred denominations without a prayer? Or is it a prayer if one prays primarily for his denomination and includes the other denominations for secondary blessings?

Does not the denominational attitude destroy prayer entirely, leaving only the form which may be used for tickling the ears of the denominationalists who are listening? On the other hand, if one prays for all as earnestly as he prays for his own denomination will it not contribute to a sense of fellowship with the whole church? Are not all others our brethren? And are not we and they the children of God through Jesus Christ our Lord? Denominational detachment must express itself in prayer so that the whole church may be taken upon a single heart and lifted into the presence of the Living Father.

I am told of a minister, who recently went to the home of another minister, not of the same denomination but of the same denominational family, and proposed that they have a

joint prayer meeting of about a dozen of their men. The second minister replied that he would have to decline the invitation because it was against the rules of his denomination to pray with any except those of his own denomination. What is more scandalous? Perhaps a thousand years from now this may serve as an interesting exhibit by the side of the mummies of Egypt, for Osiris and Jesus have about the same meaning to such worshipers — not Christian enough to be associated with Christ and not of that finer paganism that could be associated with Osiris!

Uniformity and isolation are deadening attitudes, which are artificial and unspiritual; whereas fellowship in prayer gives vitality and power to the fulfillment of the purposes of God in human life which express themselves in good will to all men. The whole process demands determination, humility, penitence, forgiveness, and patience. It may be a humiliating path we are to walk, or a heavy cross we are to bear, but these are the prices we pay for fellowship in prayer. The one pur-

pose is to find the will of God by a united judgment. It is not an adventure into a field of uncertainty and the response does not depend upon perfect faith. He is the God of the mustard seed — just a little vital beginning. Jesus said:

"Ask and the gift will be yours,
seek and you will find,
knock and the door will open to you;
for every one who asks receives,
the seeker finds,
the door is opened to anyone who knocks.
Why, which of you, when asked by his son
for a loaf, will hand him a stone?
Or, if he asks a fish, will you hand him a
serpent?
Well, if for all your evil you know to give
your children what is good,
how much more will your Father in heaven
give good gifts to those who ask him?
Well then, whatever you would like men to do to you, do just the same to them; that is the meaning of the law and the prophets."

Every denomination, however defiant in its claims of divine right, withers before the words of Jesus. It is an unadjustable factor in the spiritual universe. Nothing is so destructive of denominationalism as growth in moral goodness by cultivating contacts with God and practicing Christian attitudes of mind toward other Christians. With one hand we knock at the door of the Living Presence and with the other open in brotherhood to all Christians, saying of the whole church, as Samuel said of all Israel, " God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you " — such a prayer as sincerely lifts all Christendom — Catholic and Protestant — all Christians — in equality before God for equal blessings upon all. We explore for those contacts with God that will enable us to make certain and practicable such a brotherhood as will lead this world to believe that Jesus is the Christ.

III

The Awkwardness of Denominationalism in the Face of Equality of Christians Before God

That all Christians are equal before God is significantly and beautifully expressed in the ideal of the Lord's Supper. It is a love feast of equals before God in fellowship and in partnership with the whole church. It is a pledge to the catholicity of the universal church of Christ, brethren eating with brethren in thanksgiving to Christ for knitting together the affections of mankind to the glory of God.

And yet no service in the wide range of Christianity is so awkward and ugly as denominationalism at the Lord's Supper, with some denominations denying the Supper to other denominations or refusing to partake of the Supper with other denominations, frequently as rude about it as though it were an article of merchandise to be sold or retained,

according to circumstances. "Those of your denomination may have it if you will join us; otherwise we shall have to forbid your partaking of it"; or it may be phrased in milder terms like this: "We would be glad to have you receive it if you will join our church."

Yet this latter phrasing is really too mild to cover the bald scandal. Every fenced-off observance of the Lord's Supper, by whatever name it may be called, is put on a commercial basis of bargain and sale. Nowhere do falsehood and truth come together in such painful contrast as when the peculiarities of denominations are projected into the observance of the Lord's Supper, too frequently with elements of imagined superiority, which degrades the Supper, in most instances, into a purely denominational observance. The severe clashes of interpretation come like echoes from that awful morning when they quarreled around Jesus, jeered at him, and smote him with their hands.

But above the babble of these human voices arises from the presence of the Lord's

Supper, as gentle as the evening dew, that crying sentence, which seems to have come out of the secret chambers of human experience, and settles down upon our consciences — "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." At the Lord's Supper all of us should cover our faces in shame because we have all shared in the common guilt. No human mind can sound the moral depths of the Lord's Supper, nor scale its moral heights. The clouds of Gethsemane and Golgotha hang about it, unfolding themselves, like the heavy blue-black clouds of a golden bordered sunset. But all of us can bring our penitence and prayers and self-dedication, saying of each other and of ourselves, as Jesus said of himself and us — "For their sake I consecrate myself."

All interpretations break down in fragmentary imperfections if we allow the light of the divine sacrifice to shine through us upon others and onward toward God in its touch upon things near and remote in daily life. When some denomination drops into the sacrilege of fencing off its observance of the Supper

so that other Christians cannot participate, it is too utterly grotesque to be taken too seriously. One is reminded of the boy who, on hearing of the coming eclipse of the sun, got out a lot of tickets, which he sold for admission to his back yard to see the eclipse. After it was all over the ticket buyers learned that they could have seen it from elsewhere just as well.

To attempt to bring the denominations to an expression of equality before God at the Lord's Supper has been regarded by many as an impossibility, as though the human mind, having once taken a position, never changes — a poor compliment to religious experience or human intelligence! It is true that Christian thinking is sluggish in adventures toward brotherhood, but it is not standing still. The various denominations are moving, but they are not as far along in mutual understanding as were the thirteen colonies when they formed the United States of America more than a century and a half ago. Had any one of them — Virginia or Massachusetts, for instance — objected to citizens of adjoining colonies coming

into their territory and sharing their privileges, without first becoming citizens of Virginia or Massachusetts, it would have disrupted all ideas of the American republic. In other words, the thirteen American colonies were further along in political liberty a hundred and fifty years ago than the denominations are today in Christian liberty. Denominationalism is another term for tyranny. It is this exclusive privilege policy, which has characterized denominationalism, that has disrupted Christian idealism and raised the question whether Christ and his religion are practical factors in the affairs of a discordant world.

The denominations that try to hide their thinking in brotherhood behind infallibility, creedal declarations, or age-long traditions have in them too much good to remain there forever. It is a trick of denominationalism to resort to every ingenuity of imagination to conserve itself. Nevertheless, Christians of all denominations must partake of the Lord's Supper together if they would contribute anything at all to the testimony to the world that Jesus is

the Christ. If Christians cannot partake of the Lord's Supper together there is something radically wrong. As the world sees it, either Christ is not strong enough to bring his disciples together as he did in the first observance of the Supper, we having become stronger than he; or he has lost his power over us, we having captured his ideals and ordinances for the perpetuation of our denominationalism. In any event, Christ is painfully involved and the world gives its judgment against his leadership.

Everyone has a right to probe into the things of God. Every Christian is divinely asked to knock at the door of spiritual mysteries. It is one of the conditions of discipleship and for that reason spiritual discovery can be expressed better in human behavior than in human words, if not almost exclusively so. We do not, therefore, so much ask, What do men say? but, instead, How do they act? When one makes a discovery, he has no moral right to put a patent on it. That at once raises the question as to its counterfeit relations. If

in the world of medicine a physician should do this, in some discovery for the healing of our bodily ills, his conduct would be regarded as so unethical that the whole medical profession would feel that he had wronged them. Wherein, then, is the ethical standard that justifies a denomination in holding certain benefits of the Lord's Supper only for itself and for those who join its cult or denomination? It is not the claimed benefits that are primary, for whatever benefits may appear to have accrued to those holding such privileges they are entirely unobservable except to the denomination that makes the claim.

But the primary factor is that such a procedure is unbrotherly and will not pass any ordinary ethical standard. The fact is, and we all know it, that no denomination can say that because of certain observances we are, therefore, better than others. However, it does, in many instances, get across by some theological or ecclesiastical maneuver. But the day of reckoning before the intelligence of the world is already here, which is not merely involving

denominationalism, but Christianity and Christ as well. The only denomination whose name does carry integrity and uprightness in the eyes of the world beyond others, in many instances, is the Society of Friends, who have not been entangled with any of our ordinances, which the rest of us have so outrageously abused.

Our getting together at the Lord's Supper is not dependent upon our knowledge of this or that theory of its observance; it is dependent upon the spirit of our approach. Said Paul, "Knowledge puffs up, love builds up." This is strikingly illustrated in the observance of the Lord's Supper. All the accumulations of our theories bulk there. A priest or minister who stands at the altar or table as the cocksure interpreter, prohibiting all other Christians from drawing near, is a picture of how unholy a really holy thing can become when it falls into the hands of a denominationalist, making a public scandal of what was one of the most beautiful experiences in the life of Jesus. Is it possible to adore Jesus as the Christ and,

in the same breath, deny fellowship with his followers? Here is one of the reasons why denominational theology is so repugnant to the modern mind.

Long ago the Emperor Julian wished for a scheme by which he might be able to turn the Christians against each other, and thereby land the heaviest possible blow against Christianity. What he did not live to see we are painfully entangled in, and blows come hard and fast across the Lord's Table. Perhaps the prophet Zechariah is again saying, "What are these wounds in thine hands?" And the answer is, "Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."

It may be in some quiet church service with only members of one denomination partaking; but, if the Lord's Supper is observed, whether it be for all Christians or only for that denomination, the atmosphere throbs with pain, because more than three-fourths of Christendom will not partake of the Lord's Supper with other Christians. They are fenced off by prohibitions for theological or ecclesiastical

reasons, conscientiously established in the various systems of denominationalism. All this is so contrary to the Spirit of Christ and so scandalous to the public eye!

Aside from the controversy over the Lord's Supper and the ugly attitudes that denominationalism has set up around it, there still appears the possibility that, if we could visualize the Upper Room in Jerusalem of years ago, with an understanding beyond what the apostles that night understood, (how that crucifixion followed the Supper) it would so crucify in us all our prejudices, isolations, and unbrotherly attitudes that we would fall upon our faces before God in penitence and prayer, and arise to go forth expressing an unquestioned fellowship for the whole church of Christ.

He suffered in his crucifixion. We must suffer in ours, if we would have fellowship with him in his sufferings. Is there any place in all Christian experience where suffering is so much associated as at the Lord's Supper? All my interpretation of the Lord's Supper may be

wrong; but Christ is not wrong and brotherhood is not wrong. For him and for my brethren I must be willing to make a sacrifice of all my theories, my prejudices, my interpretations. It may be that the Catholics have gone too far with the Mass; it may be that Protestants have not gone far enough with the Lord's Supper. But when these have met both will be more likely to find the Spirit's guidance than when they seek to find that guidance alone. Some time, somewhere, we will find our own crucifixion if the Cross has any meaning to us. Then we will find reality in penitence and prayer.

This is not an impossible dream. The Kikuyu controversy of 1913 and 1914, which arose in an obscure colony in Africa in an attempt to have an interdenominational observance of the Lord's Supper, made Kikuyu for a time the most talked of place among Christians throughout the world. The fact that it could not be done without a severe wrench brought a new challenge. The suggestion at the World Conference on Faith and Order at Lausanne

in 1927 to establish penitential attitudes by the observance of the Lord's Supper on the closing day of the conference, caused delegates at once gradually to recede from the conciliatory approaches, which had so wonderfully characterized the conference, back into those threadbare traditions of denominational isolation and superiority. It was remarked by one of the delegates that, when the possibility was definitely mentioned, there was a distinct dissent in the minds of many delegates, even though they personally wished that it could be done.

The Baltimore Conference of the Christian Unity League, 1928, did it, announcing weeks beforehand that it would be done. It was a beautiful service, with Baptists, Congregationalists, Disciples, Episcopalians, Evangelicans, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Reformed, and Universalists distributing the emblems through the great audience, and they and others partaking of the Lord's Supper together, ministers and laymen and laywomen of all these denominations. Only one denominational representative withdrew at the

last moment because of pressure from his denominational authorities, but this did not affect the other ministers of that denomination, all remaining throughout the service and partaking of the Lord's Supper together.

About the same time the Ohio Pastors' Convention of the Church Federation met in Columbus and observed the Lord's Supper together without a hitch. A Protestant Episcopal rector who was present says, "A hush of solemn significance fell over the whole convention. The services began with the singing of 'Jesus the very thought of thee with sweetness fills the breast.' One thousand ministers of nearly thirty denominations were gathered around the Lord's Table to break the Bread of Life, to receive the Christ into their hearts, and to rededicate themselves to his service. The doubts and mental reservations were fast dissipated. Never was there more devout participation in Holy Communion by any congregation. The service ended with the hymn 'Crown him with many crowns.'" [1]

[1] *The Churchman*, New York.

The Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910 did not dare to even think of observing the Lord's Supper; but at the International Missionary Conference in Jerusalem in 1928, in the country of Jesus, the Lord's Supper was observed with all the denominations represented taking part. In the San Francisco Christian Unity Conference, June 7, 1928, the Lord's Supper was observed in Grace Protestant Episcopal Cathedral with all the denominations represented partaking together. In the year 1928 a door was opened — not a very wide door, perhaps, but open wide enough for the interdenominational observance of the Lord's Supper, and no man can close it. To observe the Lord's Supper interdenominationally is a step forward, but that is not enough.

Christian unity conferences should be held, as far as possible, in the atmosphere of the Lord's Supper, which should be observed either at the opening of the conference, as was done in San Francisco, or at its close, as was done in Baltimore and Columbus. There must be not only clear thinking and frank state-

ments, but gentle and humble approaches with the real attitude that it is possible for us to be wrong. Just as there are differences among us there are also possibilities of adjustments among us. Methods having to do with debates, or one denomination's writing against another denomination, or attitudes of theological or ecclesiastical superiority are out of place in Christian unity conferences. Nothing so challenges us to come to equality before God as the experience of gathering about the Lord's Supper.

The fallacy of deferring interdenominational observance of the Lord's Supper until we have all come to a common agreement, is lacking in Christian proportions certainly in two particulars: First, in denying the merit of the Lord's Supper in helping us to find our common agreements when in humility and sincerity of heart we seek for the paths of reconciliation; and, secondly, in holding to the attitude of suspicion, if not a definite affirmation, that, since one denomination is right in its own eyes and, therefore, all others are

wrong, it is the suspicious hope that all the other denominations will accept the position of the one denomination because it thinks that it has something which the others do not have. That may do for a method of procedure in forming international political covenants, when a superior nation dictates terms to inferior nations, although even in politics this is now a questionable procedure.

But when Christians come together to adjust their differences they must come on the basis of equals before God. Having come together on such a basis and partaking of the Lord's Supper together as a pledge to the new and divine standard of brotherhood, the way is opened for such conferences as will overcome every apparent impossibility. It is in the spirit of this philosophy that Christians will grow out of denominationalism and grow into Christian unity.

Civilization has advanced by breaking down national isolations. One may go further and say, with Friedrich Naumann, that "history teaches that the general progress of civili-

zation can be realized only by breaking the national liberty of small peoples." Take, for example, any one of the small nations of the world which might take the position of saying, "We shall refuse entrance to all people other than our own nationality. We shall live as we please, irrespective of the nations that surround us." One such nation taking that attitude would hinder the general progress of civilization. When a similar attitude is taken by one or more Christian denominations toward other denominations, it hinders the general growth of spirituality, it lowers the standard of Christianity, and delays the coming of the kingdom of God.

Our barriers of episcopacy, creed, baptism, or whatnot, are purely incidental by the side of the great principle of the equality of all Christians before God. If one wishes, he may have all these and more, so long as he practices the brotherhood of equality before God. If, on the other hand, holding to any one of these isolates him from other Christians, especially if there creeps into his thinking that, because

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he has done thus and so, he is better than other Christians, that thing which he has done becomes a hindrance to the will of God rather than a help, even though the Scriptures or the church councils may be cited for its authority. Many of the laws of Moses were altogether proper for observance in the time of Jesus, but there was scarcely anything against which Jesus more severely leveled his denunciation than the formalism into which those laws had passed. That which was intended to be a factor in spirituality had become an unspiritual element.

It is precisely so in this day with the principles on which our Christian denominations rest. Whether they be Catholic or Protestant, the motive for projecting them was good. Its purpose was to express truth and love. In passing out of an experience into a form it made denial of the great principles which are to guide Christianity into a united and spiritual brotherhood. Hence we are contending to-day with a form of truth that has largely become untruth, and a form of love that has

largely become unlove, for anything that tends to separate the followers of Christ into non-coöperative camps is a false principle, irrespective as to how it is labeled.

These are the days of Christian revolution — a term from which some are inclined to shy off, but which was a popular term in America in 1776. Our forbears were the revolutionists in those days. Out of the American Revolution came the Declaration of Independence, proclaiming as a self-evident truth that all men are created equal — perhaps somewhat beyond what they meant, for they were thinking more of their equality with the British king and their British kinsmen beyond the Atlantic, rather than the slave's equality with the master, for most of them were slaveholders. But a great principle had been proclaimed. A few years later, out of the French Revolution, came the Declaration of the Rights of Man, affirming that all men are free and equal in respect of their rights. It was a great step forward and shook the foundations of European civilization.

The church has had its Reformation, setting up one of the greatest landmarks in history. Both Catholicism and Protestantism have been benefited thereby. But, with all the upheavals of the Reformation, equality was an untouched principle. The Declaration of Independence had not come. The Declaration of the Rights of Man had not passed the National Assembly of France. Men were thinking in terms of freedom rather than equality; consequently Christian denominations built up their distinctive peculiarities as nations were building up their nationalism, which always differentiated, and sometimes isolated, them from others.

In this new day, with its new vocabulary, new idealism, and new hope, there must come a Christian revolution — not violent, like the American or French revolutions, which had to do with politics, but as gently as flowing tides and blooming flowers. It must come with such force that the present inequalities of Christendom shall be wiped out. Let the episcopal bodies hold to the episcopacy, for it is an an-

cient and useful form of church government. Let those bodies that hold to baptism by immersion still practice what they believe, for there is a beautiful idealism in the symbol. Let those creedal bodies hold to their creeds, if they want to, for they are the expression of an ancient faith. But let them abandon denominationalizing any one of these things for which they stand. They denominationalize when they make that practice exclusively their own and forbid others into their fellowship who do not accept it as they do. Let them no longer say, "Unless you accept this, we cannot accept you, hence we close to you our Lord's Supper privilege."

We must face the un-Christian attitude of all these inequalities. We must not be afraid to think our way through these networks of prejudices. Few men could be found who would affirm that man's relation with God is dependent upon a certain form of the episcopacy, or a certain form of baptism, or a certain creed. The Living Christ in the living soul is the ideal for which we all strive. The evidence

that both of two men have the Living Christ is in their brotherly attitudes toward each other. Only this can conquer the world.

Loyalty to Christ is not in forms, but in experience. To break away from Christian formalism, which takes us to the rocks of inequality, we must find in our hearts the declaration of the equality of all Christians before God, if we are to promote interdenominational understanding and harmony. The Christian revolution of the equality of all Christians before God means the releasing of new powers in the souls of the followers of Jesus that shall hasten the coming of the kingdom of God.

The Supper is the Lord's and it is a serious matter to forbid another Christian to partake with us of the Supper. Aside from all that has accumulated around the Supper through the centuries Christ is still alive and he intimated plainly that, if we had aught against any or any had aught against us, there should be a settlement before approaching the

altar. At the Lord's Table we bring our animosities of all kinds to be pardoned. Hugh Latimer, in his famous sermon "On the Card," put it in this homely fashion: "Pray not to me; do no good deeds for me; but go first unto thy neighbor and bring him again unto my flock, which hath forsaken the same through thy naughty words, mocks, scorns, or disdainous countenance, and so forth; and then come and offer thine oblation; then do thy devotion; then do thy alms deeds; then pray if thou wilt have me hear thee." [2] If one feels that he cannot conscientiously partake of the Supper with one from whom he differs theologically or ecclesiastically, he had better err against his conscience on the side of equals before God than against Christ on the side of superiority over others.

Our disagreements, which are matters of interpretation, are not necessarily to be abandoned, certainly not at first, but they are to be adjusted. Many of them may supplement each other and find a place of merit; whereas

[2] Lee's *The World's Orators*, Vol. 4.

separated in isolation they may be demerits. This is so in fields of other sciences; why may it not be so in the field of theological science? All this will take patience, research, courage, prayer, adventure, and consecration, which no Christian ought to be afraid of nor unwilling to undertake.

The chief contribution of the Lausanne Conference was in showing us that we had reached a place in church history when three-fifths of Christendom were willing to send representatives to confer, rather than to legislate, relative to the possibility of making such adjustments as are necessary to attain to complete unity. Henceforth "conference" will be the chief word in the Christian unity vocabulary. With it goes that principle that is expressed — and expressed plainly — in the equality of all Christians before God. This is symbolized in the observance of the Lord's Supper together. "When we carry our problems and differences about the church to the Lord's Supper," says Dr. Charles Clayton Morrison, "we have found a new basis for con-

ference. The Holy Communion provides us with a standard outside our own opinions by which we can measure and judge our denominational system. You cannot come to the Lord's Table without, in some degree, abandoning your own mind with its prejudices and partisanism and entering into the mind of God. Kneeling at the altar to receive the divine sacrifice, or sitting at the table in fellowship with him, who is the head of the church, one cannot help saying: Is the church as we have it, and is Christianity as we practice it, the kind of church, the kind of Christianity, which is congenial to and consistent with the mind of God as historically disclosed in the self-giving passion of Christ?" [3]

Christianity, with its passion as interpreted by Christ for a universal brotherhood, and denominationalism, with its clannish passion as interpreted by its leaders for the conservation and triumph of its clan, are coming more and more into such bold contrast that

[3] Charles Clayton Morrison at the Baltimore Conference of 1928, *The Christian Union Quarterly.*

it is altogether proper to raise the question as to whether one believes in Christianity or in denominationalism. They not only cannot be said to be complementary to each other, but as systems they are radically different. Personality is the center of one group — Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer, who calls all his followers into a united fellowship around himself; definitions are the centers of other groups, putting out all who do not hold to the same definitions.

"Not what, but whom, I do believe,
That, in my darkest hour of need,
Hath comfort that no mortal creed
To mortal man may give; —
Not what, but whom!
For Christ is more than all the creeds,
And his full life of gentle deeds
Shall all the creeds outlive.
Not what I do believe, but whom!
Who walks beside me in the gloom?
Who shares the burden wearisome?
Who all the dim way doth illume,

And bids me look beyond the tomb
The larger life to live? —
Not what I do believe,
But whom!
Not what,
But whom!" [4]

Christianity is now struggling as never before in its history to free itself from denominationalism. This freedom is essential to its life. There is no particular advantage in leaving one denomination for another unless, in some special instance, another denomination offers opportunity for freer adventure in Christian brotherhood, for this is the primary issue in Christianity to-day. The annual exodus of eleven or twelve thousand or so Anglicans to Rome [5] is no contribution to this subject because many more thousand Anglicans will never become Roman Catholics, as was indicated in the recent Prayer Book controversy. For two or more denominations to unite is advantageous to unity, but not small

[4] John Oxenham, *Credo.*
[5] *Catholic Directory.*

groups pulling out and leaving the body of the denomination to maintain its *status quo*.

Those persons who are Christians at heart, but are unsympathetic toward denominationalism, as was the case with our great and good countryman, Abraham Lincoln, show how one may produce as fine a Christian character as the denominations have done and, in many instances, very much finer. When one proves the error of one denomination, it is to offer another denomination in its place. That method is poor and cheap. Christ must supplant all denominations. It is sometimes better to serve Christ free of any denomination, if denominational entanglement obscures him in one's experience. Catholic denominationalism discounting Protestant churches and Protestant denominationalism discounting other Protestant churches and Catholic churches has furnished the most effective method of bringing the world to the reasonable conclusion of discounting all churches.

It is now evident that one can be a Christian without being a member of any of the

churches. Hence by its own conduct the church has brought itself to such a discount in the eyes of the world that it is as proper to speak of Christians without the church as it is to speak of Christians within the church. The vital thing is the impact of the Spirit of Christ on the lives of men and women. This impact is unceasing life, the new birth, the new creature, and, in its finest and truest sense, the religion of Redemption which Christ offers to the world.

Denominationalism is inherently deficient. It cannot produce Christian brotherhood. It can produce denominational loyalty; it can produce clannishness: but neither of these is Christian brotherhood, nor can either of these pass as a fair imitation of Christian brotherhood. In the World War those of the same denomination fought each other as savagely as they fought those of other denominations or no denomination. The fact that a regiment was largely Catholic or largely Protestant made no difference whatever as to the denomination of the regiment that was being attacked. They

could do that, however, and maintain denominational loyalty, but they could not do that and maintain Christian brotherhood.

The Catholics were in a better position than that of any other denomination to show that a Christian denomination could produce Christian brotherhood, if such a thing had been at all possible. I watched eagerly, hoping that an attempt would be made and, if possible, accomplished. But the French army, overwhelmingly Catholic, and the German army, nearly half Catholic, fought each other to the death as though the Catholic Church were no factor in the peace of the world.

Back in the eleventh century Gregory and Henry of Germany played checkers for a while as to their authority. But the Catholic Church, although apparently having recovered from all its breaks, is not as strong now as in the eleventh century and so the pope did not dare to attempt another game of checkers, because it is not Christian brotherhood that holds the Catholic Church together, any more than it is Christian brotherhood that holds any

Protestant denomination together. It is denominational loyalty in both instances — Catholic and Protestant.

In the instance of the World War, however, the same thing would have been true of Protestants, although their proportions would not have been so advantageous, but they would have been like the Catholics so far as producing Christian brotherhood at a time when the brotherhood of the world was so sadly broken down. This explains the break in several of the largest Protestant denominations on the slavery issue in the United States prior to 1860. They could divide over slavery and over any other issue and at the same time maintain denominational loyalty. Perhaps out of the break their denominational loyalty would be intensified, as was the case with Catholics on their break with Protestantism, also with Anglicans on their break with Nonconformity, and with the American Protestant denominations on their break over slavery. Denominational loyalty and Christian brotherhood cannot be associated together. Christian

brotherhood can only be produced out of a united Christendom.

Repentance is a word which we have been accustomed to put into the vocabulary of the world, saying, in the language of Jesus, "Repent, the reign of heaven is near." It needs to be put into the vocabulary of the church, saying to all the divisions of Christendom, in the words of Jesus, "Be mindful, therefore, of the height from which you have fallen. Repent at once, and act as you did at first, or else I will surely come and remove your lampstand out of its place — unless you repent." "We are, in point of fact, one divided family," says Canon Lacy, "and the first step toward reconciliation is the acknowledgment of brotherhood. That means repentance. We need not look curiously into the origins of schism; that is the way to self-exculpation. We are not called to the easy and pleasant but unprofitable task of lamenting the sins of our fathers, and building the tombs of the prophets whom they slew. We are called to repent of our sins, not of one another's sins, but of our own; the sins by which

we have perpetuated discord. And repentance means renunciation. We are not to cast away things tried and proved, in the vain hope of mutual accommodation; but there are sacrifices to be made before those things are approached. A sacrifice should be the giving of something that we value, something of cost. And it must be offered, not in hope of gain — for then it is no sacrifice, but as an act of love. We must listen to the cry, albeit raised by discordant voices, 'Sirs, ye are brethren.'" [6]

This act of love finds its symbolic expression in the coming together of all Christians — Catholic and Protestant, orthodox and unorthodox, denominationalist and heretic — as equals before God in partaking of the Lord's Supper together and pledging loyalty to a new standard of brotherhood of which Christ is the symbol. Doctor Monod, who has established in France a Protestant "Third Order," inspired by Francis of Assisi, maintains that in its practice the Catholic Church, although absent physically, "is present spiritually, and in

[6] T. A. Lacy, *Unity in Schism.*

reality it is the whole of Christendom which to-day is facing the direction of intercommunion." He says, "The Lord's Supper is the mystic pledge and the food of human unity in the name of the blood shed by the Savior for all mankind; it remains a never ceasing call to service and consecration. . . . Morally speaking, the Holy Supper — the sacrament of solidarity — signifies: 'Thou art the brother of Jesus Christ and of the brethren — behave accordingly!'" [7]

What we have so far attained, therefore, is both a realization and a prophecy. Out of the bond of this growing fellowship we begin to learn that the visible brotherhood of Christians is the great power of God in the world. Jesus said, "By this everyone will recognize that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another." [8]

[7] Wilfred Monod, University of Paris, *The Christian Union Quarterly.*

[8] John 13:35 (Moffatt's translation).

IV

There is No Alternative: Church History Must be Rewritten

One of the greatest needs in establishing better standards of behavior among Christians is the rewriting of church history. Most of the books on church history may be appropriately placed by the side of long-ago books on astronomy, geology, and chemistry. Other books on church history may be burned because they are hurtful to good will among Christians.

In making their histories center around controversies and creeds, church historians have followed national historians, who make their histories center around politicians and wars. Both interpretations must give way to some better standards. Church history, as Dean Inge says, " ought to be a biography of ideals." Perhaps the time has arrived in the rewriting of church history that no volume should

again be prepared by a single individual, but instead it should be the work of co-authorship, first representing five or six, or perhaps a dozen, Protestant denominations and later representing Protestants and Catholics in a common authorship.

History is the interpretation of the mind. Thoughts, facts, interpretations, is the order. In the matter of church history every man has in himself the early period, the Catholic period, the Protestant period, and the present day period, the latter of which is emphasizing new outlets for the interpretation of Christ. History cannot be separated from individuals. The facts surge through our minds like the currents through the sea. Incarnation is not alone applied to God in us, but to all other things in us that have their basis in fact and experience. All history is a Bible. "It is the constant inflowing of God into human affairs," says Fichte, or, as Vico calls it, "a civil theology of divine Providence." Consequently it is a subject of fascinating and adventurous study and, to be fair to himself and to the times in which he

lives, every man must be constantly revising his interpretations.

Long ago Farrar said that at best our knowledge of history is "quite fragmentary, and that even of that very partial knowledge much is imperfect and much is uncertain." [1] In Emerson's essays it is significant that his first theme has to do with history. He says, "The instinct of the mind, the purpose of nature betrays itself in the use we make of the signal narrations of history. Time dissipates to shining ether the solid angularity of facts. No anchor, no cable, no fences avail to keep a fact a fact. Babylon and Troy and Tyre and even early Rome are passing already into fiction. The garden of Eden, the sun standing still in Gibeon, is poetry thenceforward to all nations. Who cares what the fact was, when we have thus made a constellation of it to hang in heaven an immortal sign?" [2]

The past has its wealth of facts and experiences, whether considered as having to do with

1 Farrar's *Social and Present Day Questions.*
2 Emerson's *Essays.*

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national histories or church histories. Hence one of the greatest factors in present day understanding is the textbook which deals with history. About fifty years ago a Hollander, Ludvig Molkenboer, raised the issue of pedagogical efforts for peace among nations by a permanent international council of education with pacifistic aims. He presented the idea to the United Peace Congress at Basel in 1885. Since then various pedagogical world organizations have come into being, dealing with textbooks in educational institutions.

Difficult as the problem has been, substantial progress has been made for better understanding among nations by the rewriting of national histories so as to remove to some extent the sting that commonly characterized such textbooks, and thereby contribute to the abolition of war between nations. Denominationalism is another phase of war and its abolition among churches is as urgent as is the abolition of war between nations. Both are destructive to civilization because they destroy

the fundamental principles upon which civilization and Christianity are founded.

The International Moral Education Congress, which held its first meeting in London in 1908 and four years later at The Hague, with many other meetings following, has done a pioneer work in contending for textbooks that set up principles of justice and mutual understanding between the nations. A psychological approach is expressed in the New Education Fellowship, which was founded in 1921 with Adolphe Ferrière of Switzerland as one of its leaders. A more radical work is being done in Germany by the *Bund entschiedener Schulreformer,* covering social, political, and ethical fields. In the United States the National Education Association has made a worthy contribution to this cause, as has the International Woman's League for Peace and Freedom, founded in Holland under American leadership in 1915.

The World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, having its beginning at Constance in 1914, just at the

outbreak of the World War, had its first regular meeting at The Hague in 1919, when this question came to the front in discussion. The Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work at Stockholm in 1925 had a special committee on this subject. Commendable service has been done by the *Internationales Versöhnungsbund,* founded in 1922, with headquarters in Saxony, which bears some kinship to the Fellowship of Reconciliation, likewise certain of the educational institutions of the Society of Friends, the *Centre Européen de la Dotation Carnégie pour la paix internationale,* founded in 1922, with headquarters in Paris, the Norden Associations, and many other organizations, all of which have been influential, to some extent, with authors of textbooks and boards of education in the removal of what the Archbishop of Upsala called "untrue and nationalistic sentiments, insulting to other peoples." [3]

These movements have emphasized synop-

[3] *The Church and Christian Education,* Stockholm Conference on Life and Work, 1925.

tic historical tables for international use, joint textbooks on world history, an international educational bureau, a world library, international scholarships, exchange of teachers, history day in the universities with lectures on relations between the nations, acquaintances with literary masterpieces of other peoples, cultural and conciliatory elements of history over against setting one's country in the center, and other projections. The Germans have concentrated on a "production school," being the recasting of history in the school in conformity to the reshaping of the whole system of education. The Danes are trying to do for grown people what the Germans are trying to do in their "production school" for children and young people by establishing at Helsingör the first International People's High School. Other adventures are being made in pedagogical efforts for understanding and peace among the nations.

Since so much has been done in the rewriting of histories for better understanding among nations, is it not time for Christians to face

frankly our obligation to rewrite church history, in order that better standards of behavior may be established in the divided church of Christ? The answer to that question is most promptly met by two objections, as expressed by a leading educator in theology. The first is that facts are facts and no rewriting can change them, and the second is that theology, which has grown out of church history, is not a developing science like other sciences and, therefore, church history must not be disturbed. Neither of these objections can be sustained.

Regarding the first, when a dozen minds from as many angles have looked at the same fact, it is astonishing how "solid angularity" gives way to new interpretations by the side of the interpretations of the denominationalist, whose denomination is involved in the fact in question. The interpretation of the dozen minds may not have reached the final interpretation; nevertheless they are on the way to it, while in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the interpretation of the denominationalist is an

error and will remain an error so long as the interpretation is restricted solely to the denominationalist. When a man has a quarrel with his neighbor he is usually right in his own eyes and his neighbor is wrong. If it is a religious quarrel, in which the integrity of his denomination is at stake, he is infallibly right in his own eyes and, therefore, his neighbor is wrong. Unconsciously the denominationalist overcolors the facts and doctrinal position of his own denomination.

It is one of the most difficult tasks for a person of one denomination to be truthful in telling the facts regarding the purpose and doctrinal position of another denomination. There are not many cases on record where this has been done. Denominationalism breeds intellectual dishonesty and truth is usually at a discount when one denomination clashes with another denomination. It is not the question of scholarship. Denominationalism biases the understanding to the extent that one's outlook upon facts is amazingly disfigured, whereupon a half-truth can easily become an untruth.

Therefore, facts can only find their proper interpretation from many minds of differing angles instead of from one mind of one angle.

Regarding the second objection, I cannot say with a distinguished Anglican theologian, "Theology cannot be a developing science in the same sense as other sciences are, because truth does not change." [4] This position ties us up with the unscientific attitude that is forever playing loyal to the fixed. Science has had a hard fight to get away from it. Theology is in the midst of that fight now. Why the mind that deals with astronomy must yield to change, while the mind that deals with theology must remain fixed, is a conundrum. The distinction is purely artificial. Both the astronomer and the theologian are dealing with the things of God. No educational system can be truly educational if it merely transmits settled knowledge; it must be a mental process, scientific in its habits and spiritual in its adjustments for lifting each generation beyond the other. Each

[4] *Life and Letters of Mendall Creighton,* Vol. II.

generation is moving forward, leaving "behind it the traces of its thoughts, words, and deeds. And these, too, are 'written for our learning.'" [5]

We must be forever changing to adjust ourselves to God, changing in attitude, thought, definitions, and phraseology. These experiences in ourselves change and enrich our capacity for interpreting the past. Does not everything change in an unfinished world, except the unseen spiritual forces, which are the factors in making the way for the processes toward completion? Who can say that these do not change?

If theology ever redeems itself it must be by taking its place as a developing science by the side of the other sciences. The difficulty with theology is that it has dwelt upon dogma, with its limitations, at the expense of religion, which has no limitations, and dogma is so entangled in church history that to disturb one the other is involved. But that should no more make us hesitate to rewrite church history than

[5] Farrar's *Social and Present Day Questions.*

to rewrite any other kind of history. Theology's failure is in sticking to the past, trying to make church history live again in the molds of a hundred, two hundred, four hundred, or a thousand years ago. It is as unnatural as trying to push a blooming rose back into its bud. New experiences give new interpretations and old definitions and old phrases are left behind like faded petals on the ground beneath new buds and new blossoms of the climbing rose bush.

All these movements for the rewriting of national textbooks which have to do with history and geography have been vigorously opposed by certain elements, as would naturally be supposed, and, consequently, in some instances only meager results have been obtained. Under the guise of patriotism, national pride usually contends for histories which "are mainly concerned with the action of politicians and the details of wars." The same condition exists regarding the rewriting of church history. If nationalism is not a by-product of denominationalism it is so closely akin to it

that a description of one so completely involves the other that, with the changing of a phrase or two, the description of one may be equally as descriptive of the other. This is illustrated by Bishop Paul Jones' quotation from Carlton Hayes' description of nationalism, which, in the main, with a change in a word or two, is a fair description of denominationalism. He says, "Nationalism is partly love of country, but chiefly something else. Nationalism is a proud, boastful habit of mind about one's own nation, accompanied by a supercilious or hostile attitude toward other nations; it admits that individual citizens of one's own country may do wrong, but it insists that one's nationality or national state is always right. Nationalism is either ignorant and prejudiced or inhuman and jaundiced; in both cases it is a form of mania, a kind of extended and exaggerated egotism, and it has easily recognized symptoms of selfishness, intolerance, and jingoism, indicative of delusions of grandeur from which it suffers. Nationalism is artificial and it is far from

ennobling; in a word it is patriotic snobbery." [6]

Denominations are sensitive regarding their histories and, to the denominationalist, in many instances, those are still primary factors which gave to his denomination a separate existence, whether his denomination went out from another denomination on its own accord or was put out by another denomination. These factors have also been strengthened by the denominational peculiarities that have grown up through the years. Any attempt to disturb these denominational heritages is invariably looked upon as disloyalty both to the truth and to those forbears who contended for those principles and peculiarities. He forgets that whatever is of primary value has passed into other denominations and that the things for which he now contends are forms and phrasings, which are of secondary value and upon which those leaders of bygone days would have changed.

[6] Bishop Paul Jones, quoting Carlton Hayes in *Essays on Nationalism, The Community Churchman,* Park Ridge, Ill.

One is impressed with this in attending a denominational state convention, where denominational loyalty is usually to the front under various garbs. It may likewise be observed in the national conventions of the denominations, where a strong officialdom usually maintains its power by its denominational loyalty, perhaps mildly, but always striking true to the denomination. To bring into these gatherings the establishment of permanent pedagogical methods, with a part of the program always dealing directly on the relationship with other denominations (several from as many denominations taking part) would not always get across. Yet, if church history is ever rewritten, something like this must be done. I experimented with this idea in the General Convention of my own denomination for a number of years. It was popular with the freer-minded, but not so popular with the more denominational elements. However, they were remarkably patient with me for about a dozen years, but they appeared to be greatly relieved when a change was made and the plan

was abandoned, although it is doubtful if the General Conventions of my denomination ever get away from the effects of that experiment through those years.

The rewriting of church history begins with the individual Christian. Neither his reading nor his associates can be limited to his denomination. He must read the literature of other denominations and have associates in other denominations as conscientiously as he keeps his contacts with his own denomination. The building in himself of a new attitude of mind must include the whole church. In his library, whether it be composed of a dozen books or five thousand, books of his denomination must not predominate. In his thinking he must be unafraid to build bridges from himself to every other denomination in Christendom and be equally unafraid to treasure the masterpieces in literature of other denominations among his richest possessions. In his fellowships he dare not think of those of his denomination as "brother" in contradistinction to those of other denominations under the term

" mister," lest he destroy in his own soul those natural and Christian principles that make for proper behavior among Christians.

His local church must be as Christian as he tries to make his own soul. Consequently it must be unrestricted in its membership, making the sole test one's acceptance of Jesus as the Christ and one's willingness to practice his way of life. Such tests as the forms of baptism, confirmation, declaration of creeds, or particular denominational traditions cannot be made a *sine qua non* for church membership without putting the denomination above Christ.

Denominationalism has done this very thing, but it must come down from its lofty place and let Christ again be the head of his church. Among the immersion denominations, such as the Baptists and Disciples, there are perhaps in the United States between four and five hundred Christian unity churches, the Baptists being in the lead. These have not abandoned the practice of baptism by immersion, but they receive persons from other de-

nominations into their membership without rebaptism, similar to the St. Paul's Protestant Episcopal Church of Richmond, Virginia, — perhaps the most prominent church of that denomination in the state of Virginia, — which has not abandoned the Protestant Episcopal practice of confirmation, but receives into its membership persons from other denominations without confirmation. These churches are opening the way to a better understanding among Christians and take their place as real Christian unity churches.

It is not infrequent that the church building will have somewhere on the walls in its smaller rooms the pictures of its denominational leaders. This has its influence in loyalty to the denomination rather than in fellowship with all denominations. I have found some release in the interior decorations of my church building in having in big letters in the ceiling and around the border the names of many of the outstanding characters in church history.

In the auditorium ceiling are eight panels and a dome. In the top of the dome is the pic-

ture of Sir Joshua Reynolds' "Five Angels" and on the side of the dome are the names of four Jewish characters — Abraham, Moses, David, and Ezra; the names of four Jewish prophets — Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, and Hosea; and the names of four Jewish Christian apostles — Peter, James, John, and Paul.

In the panels are the names of four Christian teachers — Augustine, Wyclif, Alford, and Drummond; the names of four Christian preachers — Chrysostom, Robertson, Spurgeon, and Moody; the names of four Christian artists — Michelangelo, Raphael, Bach, and Watts; the names of four Christian prophets of international peace — Origen, Grotius, Penn, and Tolstoi; the names of four Christian prophets of unity — Cyprian, Calixtus, Baxter, and Campbell; the names of four Christian mystics and pietists — Francis of Assisi, Bunyan, Spener, and Wesley; the names of four Christian prophets of theological reform — Savonarola, Luther, Calvin, and Knox; and the names of four Christian

prophets of social reform — Wilberforce, John Howard, Booth, and Frances Willard.

In the adjoining section around the border of the ceiling are the names of the following great Christian missionaries — Paul, Ulfilas, Augustine, Boniface, Lull, Xavier, Eliot, Schwartz, Carey, Martyn, Morrison, Judson, Moffat, Scudder, Duff, Parker, Livingstone, Paton, Verbeck, John, Nicholai, Taylor, Swain, Neesima, and Shelton. Some of these are Eastern Orthodox, some are Catholics, some are Anglicans, some are Protestants, and some are the excommunicated, but all are my brethren, whom I shall know without labels or anathemas in the spirit world, where neither labels nor anathemas shall "be remembered, nor come into mind."[7] But as Christians who are constantly saying in our prayers, "Thy kingdom come," we must not be satisfied with the un-Christian behavior that has characterized the church of Christ through the centuries.

We should not have to wait for our exit

[7] Isa. 65:17.

from this world to see these things fulfilled. It is unfair to Christ. The need of the coming of the kingdom of God is here and now and, without question, it is the most immediate necessity of all history. "He has granted us," says Paul, "complete insight and understanding of the open secret of his will, showing us how it was the purpose of his design so to order it in the fullness of the ages that all things in heaven and earth alike should be gathered up in Christ." [8]

There is no alternative. Church history must be rewritten. In the rewriting it must come from the denominations, but this cannot be done unless there is some kind of pedagogical effort put forth, which shall include the individual, the local church, the gathering of the representatives of the local churches, the curriculum of the denominational college, and the editorial page of the denominational paper.

This is so necessary that in the gathering of denominational groups for a few days, such as a denominational convention, there should

[8] Eph. 1:9–11 (Moffatt's translation).

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always be a large place on the program dealing with our relations with other denominations and with persons of other denominations taking part in that program. It is a poor convention if its concern is only for its denomination — poor from every point of view. All conciliatory approaches should be definite, such as the supporting by one denomination of a mission station of another denomination in part, or in whole, without taking it over, publishing the same in their annual missionary reports; or one denomination might grant a certain number of scholarships in its schools to those of another denomination, publishing the same in their catalogues; or ministers might be freely exchanged, after a while going back to their former denomination or to some other denomination; likewise an exchange of teachers might be made in the schools.

Some few denominations are already making some contribution in these fields, but it must become a universal practice if church history would get its proper rewriting. And so with Emerson it may be said, " I have no ex-

pectation that any man will read history aright, who thinks that what was done in a remote age, by men whose names have resounded far, has any deeper sense than what he is doing to-day." [9]

[9] Emerson's *Essays*.

V

The Hurt to Christianity Through Denominational "Voices"

It may properly be said that the two chief factors for the perpetuation of the denominations is the denominational school and the denominational paper. Whatever value these were in the past, in these times it is pertinent to raise bluntly the question, Is their continuance a help or a hindrance to the spiritual unity of the church of God?

The denominational school did, for a long time, afford an opportunity for an education, which would not have been got without it, but that is not so to-day. To a less degree the same complimentary word may be said of the denominational paper of former years in its dissemination of religious information, although it was usually controversial and partisan. But in these times, even though both the denominational school and the denominational paper

have changed, being less rigid than in former years, nevertheless their continuance raises a question in the realm of Christian ethics.

Can a school or a paper be denominational and Christian at the same time? To say that it may be denominational but not sectarian is dodging the question. The terms "denominational" and "sectarian" are merely descriptive of parties in the church. Years ago these parties were spoken of as "sects"; later they came to be spoken of by the milder term "denominations." The latter is somewhat less harsh than the former, but they mean the same thing and, therefore, they are synonymous. Some denominations prefer the term "communion" or "brotherhood," particularly as applied to their party, others prefer to be called "the church," with all others called denominations or sects, but all these terms are merely a play of words and mean the same thing. They are descriptive of parties in the church, and parties in the church are wrong.

It is common, in some quarters, to speak of a denominational school as "Christian" and

a state or privately endowed school as "secular" or "non-Christian." This classification is altogether unfair. It does not follow at all that, because a school or a paper is under the control of a denomination, it is, therefore, Christian, any more than a state or privately endowed institution is, therefore, secular or non-Christian because it is not under the control of some denomination.

Some years ago I made a tour across the continent, covering the entire school year, speaking in state, privately endowed, and denominational institutions, delivering about two hundred addresses and holding half as many conferences, and my conclusions were that the state and privately endowed institutions manifested, both in their faculties and student bodies, a finer type of religion than the denominational schools. In the same year Dr. Hugh Black had a similar experience, although he did not cover as wide an area as I did and, in his conclusions, he says: "I found a greater appreciation of religious matters and interest in them in the state universities than in

the denominational colleges." [1] Others have borne similar testimony.

The fact that the school or paper is denominational makes it only partly Christian. No one of the denominational units represents the whole. The school or the paper is more or less an interpretation of a denomination, however loosely tied to the denomination it may be, and is, therefore, partisan. "A sharp distinction," says President Guth, "should be made between denominational education and Christian education. It is assumed by many that the two terms are synonymous; that a Christian education can be secured only in a church school. And many assume, also, that the education offered in the state or privately endowed institution is non-Christian, if not anti-Christian. If this is so, which I do not believe, then the first duty of the church is to see that the condition is changed. The state and privately endowed institutions belong as much to the church as they do to the state. They are as

[1] Athearn's *Religious Education and American Democracy.*

much a part of the endeavor and effort to Christianize as any other field in American or world civilization. If the state and privately endowed universities are not doing their part to make religion a dominant factor in our national life, are the churches entirely blameless?" [2]

The time is here and now when such evolutionary processes should be established for interdenominationalizing both the denominational school and the denominational paper so that they would gradually lose their denominational affiliations and come to represent the Christian sentiment of the whole community. This should apply to all denominational schools — from the parochial school to the denominational college, university, and theological seminary, as well as to the entire denominational press. So deeply am I convinced of this that I quietly slipped away from colleges of my denomination that had honored me with their trusteeships — one the oldest college of my denomination, another the youngest college

[2] W. W. Guth, Goucher College, *The Christian Union Quarterly.*

geographically nearest to me, and the third being the college where I was educated. I did the same thing regarding a denominational publication board of my denomination, which is responsible for one of my denominational papers and other denominational literature. On the first opportunity that presented itself for me to slip away from its directorate I did so. The strongest dissent that I can make against denominationalism is myself refusing to be denominationalized by any institution of my denomination.

The processes toward interdenominationalizing are not difficult. Why not move gradually to a more Christian principle, first by admitting a third of the members of the board from other denominations? This should apply both to educational institutions and publication houses. If the charters will not allow this, change the charters. This is being done constantly in business affairs. Why may it not be done in the affairs of the church? Most denominational institutions have persons of other denominations on their faculties. This

has been so for many years and it is a commendable step. Few denominational papers, however, have on their editorial staff any but members of their own denomination. This is a most unfair and unhappy condition, although all denominational papers do, from time to time, publish articles by persons from other denominations. But these processes should include trustees, faculties, and editorial staffs. It would mean the cultivation of Christian fellowship at the sources of denominationalism. From this step of general recognition of other Christians these institutions would gradually grow into unity.

Besides, it is possible both for the denominational school and the denominational paper to hasten this Christian fellowship by advocating some such processes as herein suggested; for the schools to establish lectureships for the whole student body on the art of Christians living together; and for the papers to carry articles on Christian fellowship, frequently from persons of other denominations, with editorial endorsement. This change of

front would be the greatest factor in bringing understanding and fellowship into the divided house of our Lord. Some schools and papers are already doing this, but I am insisting that these principles be nailed to the masthead of all denominational schools and all denominational papers as a distinct part of their evangelism of the churches, thereby causing these institutions to become leading factors in removing the scandal of denominationalism from the church of Christ.

The beginning of the denominational school may be traced back to the council of Trent, especially the beginning of theological seminaries. The intention of the originators was to safeguard truth, — and this was an admirable idea, — but the method of separation has been hurtful both to the church as the message bearer of the truth and to the world as the recipient of the truth. Prior to the council of Trent the clergy were educated in the universities and, consequently, they were in touch with the advance thinking of the world. With the rise of the denominational school they were

not only removed from the centers of thought at the time when the whole world was seeking new paths for thinking, but they unconsciously partook of all that goes with an isolated system of education, including the setting up of a division between religion and reality.

Protestantism yielded itself to what it regarded as a necessity in order that its varied interpretations of the Scriptures might become permanent in the thought of the world. Every new movement must have a school of its own and the school, in turn, perpetuated the movement. No denomination could get fairly under way unless it could point to its own school or schools, where genuine orthodoxy was maintained in the midst of other denominational schools. These represented all grades of heresy from extreme to moderate, depending upon the angle of approach. Erasmus says, "The doctrine of Christ, a stranger formerly to battle over words, came to be made dependent on defenses of philosophy. This was the first downward step towards the ruin of the church." [3]

[3] Curtis' *History of Creeds and Confessions.*

The schools of each denomination became the centers of denominational philosophies. All denominations honestly felt that they were divinely called to plant schools wherever they could get a piece of land donated, or its equivalent in money for the purchase of land, and there erect school buildings, until, in America in particular, nearly every denomination is overburdened with its multiplicity of schools.

It is not, however, in the province of this chapter to discuss the motives that led to the establishment of these schools nor the multiplicity of denominational schools, nor to inquire as to whether their equipments are poor or ample, or whether their teachers are living on meager or insufficient salaries, although these elements enter vitally into the education of a nation. Neither is the question raised as to the small school nor the state university, nor whether those coming out of the denominational schools are as well equipped in their knowledge of the languages and sciences as those from other schools. They may be equally as well equipped in those things, but education

is not expressed in terms of intelligence. It is rather in terms of conduct and character. William James says, "Education cannot be better described than by calling it the organization of acquired habits of conduct and tendencies of behavior."[4] But the denominational schools break the organization, separating themselves according to denominations as though each possessed something which the other did not have and, therefore, could not impart. Laying aside the fact that the claim is purely fictitious, the policy shatters the spiritual universe into as many parts as there are parties, disturbing the fundamental principles "of conduct and tendencies of behavior."

Education must deal with the wholeness of life. We are in a world of the incomplete. Schools are necessary for the development of the incomplete. Education involves both training away from something and training toward something. A system of education may strengthen those inherent elements of social adjustment or it may weaken and divide

[4] James' *Talks to Teachers.*

them, but a system that weakens and divides them is certainly not functioning properly, and such a policy must be a matter of concern to all, because it trains the individual away from the real destiny of human life, debarring him from his rightful place in the social whole.

Education must be a unitary process or it is defective. The denominational school is not a unitary factor. It may be for its own denomination, but the little less than two hundred units separated as in American Christianity may be ever so well united in themselves and yet, if these units are not uniting and adjusting themselves to each other for the benefit of the whole, the educational process has not been conducive either to right conduct or proper behavior.

"Education is," as Nicholas Murray Butler says, "a gradual adjustment to the spiritual possessions of the race."[5] The denominational school and the denominational paper are guardians of denominational traditions, which are separative in character. The very

[5] Butler's *Meaning of Education.*

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presence of these schools and papers, whether they teach their denominational tenets or not, is an attempt to keep alive, through pride if not through doctrine, a breach in spiritual thought. These breaches, whether ancient or modern, were at one time regarded among the infallible interpretations by their honest advocates, but perhaps now are held only as matters of opinion by the honest sons of those same advocates. Consequently the very fact that the denominational school or the denominational paper is here, bearing the stamp of a divisive element, although it may not give denominational instruction in the class room, nor contend often for its denominational tenets in its editorial columns, contradicts the unitary processes of present day education. This fact raises at once the question as to the ethical propriety of its continuance.

Times have changed. Severity has been taken out of most denominational teaching, but there is always a rigid side to denominationalism. Canon Streeter says, "A century ago we were all eyes for the errors of every

religious body but our own; to-day we are recognizing the truth in one another's positions; but there is one more stage, and that is for each to awaken to the *errors* in his own views — this is the hardest stage of all." [6] We can approach this stage more satisfactorily if we attempt to approach the errors that are common to us all rather than touching some distinctive position that may have lost its interest to other denominations, but is still sacredly guarded by the denomination that originated it or restated it. The common errors in the present day Christianity are, therefore, the denominational school and the denominational paper.

That they have grown in efficiency and in general fellowship with the schools and papers of other denominations is apparent to all students of social problems. Nevertheless, their systems, being conducted upon a divisive principle, will train some temperaments to the severity of the original advocates, such as those extremes that may now be found in all denom-

[6] Streeter's *Restatement and Reunion.*

inations, while other temperaments yield to the broadening influences of general education and are fellows with those of other denominations as far as their denominational traditions will let them go. If we find a system of training that pushes an individual away from his fellows, let us not deceive ourselves by thinking that that system of training has in it high merit. Such a system always stands for a fundamental error and always will so stand.

The function which education has to discharge is, according to Herbert Spencer, "to prepare us for complete living." [7] No institution that represents a party in Christendom, such as a denominational school or a denominational paper, can aid, to his fullest development, a Christian whose duties are inherently to all Christendom in particular and to society in general, unless it changes its attitude. That individual has in him latent powers with the possibilities of adjustment to the highest demands of God and his fellows. Consequently development is a necessity for the completion

[7] Spencer's *Education*.

of manhood and education is the moral aid to that development.

Most of our theological barriers are fictitious, certainly among Protestants. There is not a Protestant theological seminary now, either in this country or abroad, but would produce better ministers if the outstanding Protestant interpretations of the Scriptures were taught under the same roof by those who are the advocates of those interpretations. But separating students to one interpretation and giving the other interpretations at second hand is as uncomfortable to the student's thought as second-hand clothes are to his body.

To say the least, such a method would tone down many of our Protestant interpretations that need toning down to find a normal adjustment. The same principle applies to Catholicism. Protestants will never understand Catholicism nor will Catholics ever understand Protestantism until the trusteeships and faculties and editorships of each are open to both. However independent and arrogant

toward each other now, both of these interpretations need each other.

"Truth has nothing to fear in mingling with unbelievers, much less with believers. It is the divine method of its transmission and it mingles better in human flesh than in books. Jesus went himself among the people and left no commentaries, but left his life, and the spirit of the message is seen in the conduct and behavior of its adherents far more than in its theological statements.

"Universal fellowship with the saints is the model of God, while exclusiveness is the den of provincialism and denominationalism. It cannot be true that associating with other denominations destroys the truth of another. It may destroy its narrowness and shame its denominationalism, but to its truth is given vision and vitality. He who has convictions can mingle with all Christians and retain those convictions as certainly as, mingling with the thousands on the street, he keeps his individual name. The scourge of a message that has in it the call of God is giving to it a contracted horizon and

making it provincial [as every denominational school and paper must do]. It is the violation of a divine principle, for the atmosphere of provincialism is as repulsive as the musty smell of an ill-ventilated room." [8] It is abandoning the sunshine of the great universal world for artificial light.

The world abounds in cleavages — cleavages of race, nation, religion, creed, and class. It is the function of education to span these cleavages, making a highway to the brotherhood of humanity. The denominational school stands for the cleavage of creeds, whether those creeds are written or unwritten, and consequently it cannot function in this task beyond the cry of the prisoner for freedom. No man can teach complete living unless he is approaching it himself, unfettered by denominational barriers. Whatever this generation may be it owes its debt of unitary processes in education to the next generation, if the path of mankind is to go upward toward God.

[8] Ainslie's *Yale Lectures: The Message of the Disciples for the Union of the Church.*

The chief question remains — not, What have men learned? but, What have men become? It is the individual's becoming something himself that is the great and only permanent achievement. This cannot be carried to its fullest development without the freest training of the intellect and the emotions and the will. Religion has its opportunity here, but the denominational school and denominational paper are too biased to function.

The tide is turning away from both of these, particularly from the denominational paper, so that what the denominational school and denominational paper refused to lead the denomination to do, a mysterious hand appears to be guiding it in doing; and that tide is not likely to flow back, in the opinion of many, until the denominational school and denominational paper become interdenominationalized. So the hopeful condition as regards both education and religion is that the denominational school and the denominational paper, as denominational and, therefore, divisive institutions, have seen their best days, irre-

spective of their increasing endowments. Thought is a more powerful factor than money, and present day thought is certainly turning away from the denominational school and the denominational paper. Standing apart as these schools and papers are, their messages to the world are neither healthy nor hopeful.

In trying to escape the tragedy of uneducational functioning, in which the denominational schools and papers are involved, many are rapidly discovering their denominational limitations. Most of these schools are seeking to coördinate their work through the various educational organizations. Some have either already adopted the interdenominationalizing processes or are gradually approaching these processes as far as their denominations will permit. But these conditions, ever so good as far as they go, do not satisfy the demands for such unitary processes as are necessary in Christian education for these times. It is the Christian school, representing the Christian sentiment of the whole community, that is

not only a necessity but must always have precedence in Christian culture and educational equipment over the denominational school, which represents only a part of the Christian sentiment of the community.

This is a denominational as well as an educational problem. It can be solved only by the denominations themselves, as some years ago six missionary boards of as many denominations so adjusted the educational work in Nanking, China, as to unify the schools of those denominations, and as a few schools are doing in this country. It must necessarily be by evolutionary processes, using some schools to liberalize their own denominations and others to unite with schools of other denominations until the whole Christian educational system could become interdenominationalized. Either some such policy should be adopted or there will be a continuation of competition and division on denominational pride or theological dogmas, which have already almost wrecked the whole Christian educational system, for de-

nominationalism is the most destructive heresy of history.

The unitary process does not imply elimination, but comprehension. There are true religious values to be conserved. The sacerdotal and antisacerdotal interpretations as well as the historic point of view in religion in comparison with that of fixed authority are forever clashing. Some place must be found where these interpretations can be thought through. Why not the school room?

What is being done so generally in coöperative educational work in China we ought to be able to do in America, unless the atmosphere of non-Christian peoples furnishes the opportunity to freer coöperation than the denominational atmosphere of America. Speaking of the foreign field, Dr. Robert E. Speer says, "I could name scores of union colleges and theological seminaries and hospitals and institutions of every kind. The day has gone by when any separate communion undertakes any longer to build up alone a great educational institution of higher learning on the mis-

sion field. We have realized that there is nothing in truth that can be sectarian, that the great body of truth is common truth, and that we should unite in undertaking higher educational work. In building a missionary university from two to ten different organizations will often unite." The interdenominationalizing policy is the scientific method of approach, for there are values in all of these denominations. These values depreciate when separated; they increase when coordinated.

Like long-ago abandoned pedagogical methods in education, the denominational school and paper are passing and must absolutely pass away in order that the coming generations may have fairer chances for their social adjustments and spiritual possibilities. Dr. Coe says, " The standpoint of Christianity, moreover, is that of wholeness of life, from which no human good can be excluded." [9] The denominational school or the denominational paper cannot function in the wholeness of

[9] George A. Coe's *Education in Religion and Morals.*

things because they essentially stand for only a part.

The denominational paper is the observation through a keyhole upon the activities of the church. As a rule the news and interpretations are exclusively of that one denomination, as, for instance, in a particular city, as though the only followers Christ had there were of that denomination. It is a false view of Christianity — tragically false — and one who reads only his own denominational paper will not only not be fair in his observations of Christian work where other denominations are involved as well as his own, but his vision of Christian fellowship will be permanently impaired. It is a grave error in education and is, therefore, unfair to religion and morals. It is also unfair to the present generation, which faces great evils over against which stand the denominational school and the denominational paper, through which the highest expressions of religion and morals cannot function because of their divisive capacities and schismatic natures. Unless these institutions be willing to give their

strength to the unifying of the Christian forces of the world they are decided hindrances to moral and religious expressions. Their existence may be purely a matter of denominational pride, and I am inclined to think that denominational pride figures in its continuance more than denominational tenets, but, whatever may be its cause, there can be no justification for the continuance of either the denominational school or the denominational paper as voices of a denomination.

An institution may serve one generation acceptably, but that is no reason why it is to serve all generations. Things that have been proper at one time have become improper at other times, and things that have been tolerated in one period, perhaps warmly defended by some, have been entirely abolished in other periods. Because an institution has become established in the thought and affections of a respectable group or groups is no reason for its perpetuity.

I am not detracting from any good that the denominational school or the denomina-

tional paper has done in the past. Another day is here. Prejudice, always unreasonable, has been, in many instances in the past, so unreasonable that only a denominational school could get financial support, for the money in the church has usually been in the hands of its most conservative or denominational elements. In many instances the school had to present a double-faced policy, saying to those of its denomination, " It is your duty to support the school which stands for the things you believe," and for the patronage of those of other denominations, " There is no denominational instruction given in the school." Aside from this double-faced policy this financial support in turn gave a certain rigidity to the standards of the school, perhaps unconsciously.

But the rigidity of orthodoxy is the inevitable cause of heresy and schism, so that the ordinary method pursued to establish excessive verbal orthodoxy not only defeats its end of making the whole community orthodox, but produces heresy and schism. Orthodoxy and catholicity rivaled each other for centuries

until they separated — one into the Eastern Orthodox Church and the other into the Roman Catholic Church. This made a definite epoch in the rise of denominational theology, which developed rapidly following the council of Trent. Bishop Headlam says, referring to this council, "A wise observer is reported to have said that by the institution of ecclesiastical seminaries the council exercised greater influence than by any other of its decrees." [10] That may be true, but as the Greek and Latin forms of Christianity became finally stereotyped in consequence of their division, the many divisions in Protestantism likewise became stereotyped, not so rigidly, perhaps, as those of the Greek and Latin forms, but, nevertheless, stereotyped, and the greatest factors to maintain this stereotyped condition are the denominational school and the denominational paper.

Since, then, the denominational school is the product of medieval thinking and the de-

[10] Arthur C. Headlam's *Doctrine of the Church and Christian Reunion.*

nominational paper the product of divisive traditions, both divisive in character, necessarily maintaining in most instances stereotyped attitudes, it is not difficult to see that as educational institutions they can and ought to be abolished. This does not call for the closing at once of all the denominational schools nor the suspension of all denominational papers. Only those schools need to be closed that are in close proximity to other schools with which they could be united, and the same could be said of the denominational paper. This could be handled by the schools and papers themselves and, if necessary, by the coöperation of a commission on Christian education.

The only barrier to this policy is denominationalism, with its distrust of those in other denominations, with its fictitious attitudes toward others, and with its belated sense of its own infallibility. Consequently it will doubtless be hard in many instances for the denominations to let go. But the conscience of the church must be so trained that it will be uncomfortable for any one denomination to hold

the exclusive control of any one school or any one paper; likewise, that it will be uncomfortable for trustees to hold their places on boards of denominational schools and publishing houses and teachers to hold their places on faculties of denominational schools, where all are members of one denomination; also that a Christian will be uncomfortable if the only religious paper coming into his home is that of his denomination. All these are the marks of the scandal. How is the scandal to be abolished except those to whom Christ has committed his Spirit act in the Spirit of Christ? Certainly that Spirit is not sympathetic toward perpetuation of the scandal of denominationalism. There must be such an interdenominationalizing policy as to lose sight of the denomination in educational training in order that Christ may be lifted up above all parties and all creeds.

Theological seminaries would perhaps have more difficulty in making adjustments, but this is by no means an impossibility. If the various systems of interpretation cannot be

adjusted and some one denomination contends that it is impossible for it to be wrong, then we face the alternative of one or the other being false, or the still severer verdict, which the world is slowly accumulating, that both are false; but adjustment is possible where there is freedom and truth.

This adjustment could begin by having representatives of other denominations become members of the faculty for short periods, with the same freedom of instruction as the denomination in control. Finding this to be the more scientific method of procedure than the present method, permanent places would be given on the faculty and on the board of trustees until the theological seminary came to be distinctively Christian, representing the whole church, instead of a denomination, which represents only a part. The church is waiting for such a constructive policy in order to go upon its mission of making Christianity a vital, common sense factor for good will among all peoples which the scandal of denominationalism has made it incompetent to do.

Customs, traditions, property holdings, charter restrictions, endowments, and a score of other apparent hindrances stalk across our approaches, but where there is a will there is a way. No greater need ever knocked at the door of the church than the necessity of these times to interdenominationalize the educational system of the church, as applied both to schools and papers, and to give to education the Christian vision, the Christian adjustment, the Christian fellowship, and the Christian wholeness of life.

This day is calling us to repair the breaches of the past; to revise our convictions as to the realities of life; to set up standards that have in them the ethical instincts of the Gospel; to abandon fictitious attitudes regarding race, nation, creed, and class; to use the spiritual weapons of divine grace in our daily warfare; and to interpret good will in terms of wholesome understanding and genuine appreciation of others. There is not a denominational school or a denominational paper on the globe that alone can do this, unless they come

out as advocates for some such system as will unify their interests. Christian education must lead us to the fulfillment of those noble ideals for which we hunger and which are beautifully expressed by Wordsworth when he says,

"We live by admiration, hope, and love,
And as these are well and wisely placed,
In dignity of being we ascend."

VI

Can the World be Christianized by a Denominational Christianity?

The picture of the lonely figure of Jesus taking up the task of building a world from the model of the mind of God stands in a painful contrast with the strife and pettiness of denominationalism. He is still the lonely figure of the world with his plans and purposes so diametrically interpreted from their sources that they are hindrances rather than helps in making practical the will of God among men. To look upon his dream of world conquest and to expect denominational Christianity, with its inequalities and quarrels, to make real that conquest is as absurd as Don Quixote's adventures in chivalry.

It brings to mind that wonderful Florentine picture of Michelangelo observing a pile of Carrara marble out of which he was to carve

his conception of Moses. A workman is directing attention to a huge flawless block, an open portfolio discloses a picture of Moses, and in the center stands the great artist himself, who appears to see in the marble the full-sized figure of the Jewish lawgiver. As indescribable as is the poise and intuition of Michelangelo, there is upon his countenance an expression that conveys fear of possible loss of skill before realizing his dream.

The picture of Jesus in his earthly ministry is likewise incomplete without the expression of alarm upon his countenance. With all the mysterious gloom of Golgotha, his cry of disappointment on the Cross is one of the boldest strokes in that picture. No one can fathom the depths of disappointment in that interrogatory prayer: "My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?" Its echo is still heard in the agony of the divided church, which is unhappy in its scandal. Jesus must have felt the possible impairing, and perhaps loss, of his ideal for the world when all his earthly friendships seemed to be breaking away. Its quiver

has run down through the centuries in every break and isolated attitude of denominational Christianity.

Instead of the church committing itself to reconciliation at any cost, as Christ had done in his crucifixion, it made choice of the easier road by setting up isolations, expressed in the denominationalism of Eastern Orthodoxy, the denominationalism of Catholicism, the denominationalism of Anglicanism, the denominationalism of Protestantism. It was much easier to excommunicate or to be excommunicated than to suffer and think together.

The church followed the natural way. "All the people saw lilies in the field and sparrows upon the roof," says Bishop Nicholai, "but Jesus saw more. He saw how his Father clothed the lilies and how he fed the sparrows. He united the natural and supernatural in his teaching.

'Love those who love thee' was natural teaching. But he added, 'and those who hate

and persecute thee,' which was supernatural.

'Give to them who give to thee' was natural teaching. But he added, 'and to them who do not give to thee' which was supernatural.

'Bless those who bless thee' was natural teaching. But he added, 'and those who curse thee,' which was supernatural.

"For him there was as little boundary between heaven and earth, between nature and supernature, as between Israel and Canaan, or as between man and man." [1] But withdrawing and setting up denominationalism in every part of Christendom gave both weakness and shame to the church, hindering its christianizing of the world because it had not itself become christianized. Consequently we are dealing to-day with a Christianity that is so weakened in consequence of its scandal of denominationalism that it is not strong enough

[1] Nicholai Velimirovic, *The Agony of the Church.*

to go satisfactorily on the mission of Christ to the world.

Christ came into the world for a purpose, which has in it the finest possibility of courage and adventure of which the soul is capable. We need to face squarely a world that is largely un-Christian and not be afraid to ask ourselves, Is it possible to christianize the world with an unchristianized church? The task to be performed is the greatest in history, but the instrument by which it is to be done has incapacitated itself by its scandalous divisions. No longer is it being asked, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" But I hear the multitudes voicing the contempt of these times by asking, "What good can come out of the church?" Their inquiries alarm and chasten us in our public worship and spiritual ministrations.

The denominations are launching vast programs for the evangelization of the world. Great sums of money are being raised, a large number of new buildings are in course of erection, and a general call is being made for

missionary volunteers. No more thrilling addresses may be heard in denominational gatherings than those dealing with missionary activities and possibilities. It is a great cause. It is the field of modern romance. It has back of it the command of Christ and the precedent of the primitive church.

But what a maze of entanglements! Converts to the Roman Catholics! Converts to the Old Catholic Church in America! Converts to the North American Old Roman Catholic Church! Converts to the Polish National Catholic Church! Converts to the American Catholic Church! Converts to the Armenian Apostolic Church in America! Converts to the Greek Orthodox Church! Converts to the Syrian Holy Orthodox Greek Catholic Mission in North America! Converts to the Methodists! Converts to the Methodists, South! Converts to the Methodist Protestants! Converts to the Free Methodists! Converts to the Primitive Methodists! Converts to the Wesleyan Methodist Connection! Converts to the Congregational Methodists! Con-

verts to the Union American Methodists! Converts to the Presbyterians in the U. S. A.! Converts to the Presbyterians in the U. S.! Converts to the United Presbyterians! Converts to the Cumberland Presbyterians! Converts to the Reformed Presbyterians! Converts to the Associate Reformed Presbyterians! Converts to the Disciples of Christ! Converts to the Christians! Converts to the Churches of Christ! Converts to the Protestant Episcopalians! Converts to the Reformed Episcopalians! Converts to the Congregationalists! Converts to the Baptists, North! Converts to the Southern Baptists! Converts to the Six-Principle Baptists! Converts to the Seventh-Day Baptists! Converts to the Primitive Baptists! Converts to the Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit-Predestinarian Baptists! Converts to the New Jerusalem Church! Converts to the Moravians! Converts to the Reformed Church in America! Converts to the Reformed Church in the United States! Converts to the Christian Reformed Church! Converts to the Orthodox Friends! Converts

to the Hicksite Friends! Converts to the Evangelical Associations! Converts to the United Evangelicals! Converts to the Evangelical Synod of North America! Converts to the United Lutherans! Converts to the Missouri Lutheran Synod! Converts to the Joint Ohio Lutheran Synod! Converts to the United Brethren! Converts to the Mennonites! Converts to the Old Order Amish Mennonites! Converts to the Mennonite Church of God in Christ! Converts to the Pilgrim Holiness Church! Converts to the Pentecostal Holiness Church! Converts to the Unitarians! Converts to the Universalists!

And a hundred and fifty additional groups of converts, all denominationally labeled! It is with no discourtesy that this list of denominations is shortened. What a bedlam to take the Gospel of Christ to China! Or to Japan! Or to India! Or to America! Or to the man on the streets of my own city! But they make converts, you say; yes, they do because the heart of the world is full of sorrow and the sorrowful are looking for comfort.

But my question is, Is it fair either to Christ or to humanity?

Some of these converts are so thoroughly denominationalized that they cannot associate with other denominational converts in prayer and service without losing their denominational integrity. And to lose denominational integrity is like losing one's soul! They are "the untouchables," brought out of death and reclothed with the clothes of the dead! Is it possible for one to say that God made Catholics, Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, Disciples, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Mennonites, and converts to all these other denominations? Is the sinner still contending that God is responsible for his sin?

All these converts are definitely tied to some denominational history, rooted in American or European theology. Some are apostolic, some are post-apostolic, but that is immaterial. There are great theological gulfs between many of these groups so that one cannot pass from one group to the other, either in time or eternity, without repudiation, recon-

firmation, or rebaptism. What a blight this whole business is before which is accumulating the merited contempt of intelligence!

Among the first things taught these converts, either directly or indirectly, is denominational loyalty. Many go further by teaching their converts not to have too much to do with other Christians, such as worshiping God together, or partaking of the Lord's Supper together, or exchanging members by letter from one denomination to another, or practicing those principles that have to do with love for and confidence in other Christians, which Christ taught was the essential mark of discipleship. Whatever decent behavior they may have observed in conformity to the common laws of nature before becoming converts must be abandoned for the artificial attitudes of denominationalism, which is essentially intolerant, arrogant, and tyrannical. But these denominational peculiarities must pass away. They will pass away, go floating out of memory like straws on the ebbing tide. There are already enough Christians, in and out of the

denominations, to make this possible in this generation.

When Jesus observed the scribes and Pharisees compassing sea and land in a similar business he did not use very complimentary phrases in expressing his opinion of their efforts. What must be his opinion of the two hundred denominations, making their converts separately and in most instances separating them to a certain denominational standard — perhaps mildly, but separating them — and others separating them so absolutely that there can be no fellowship between them and others? Denominationalism may live in fine buildings and wear good clothes, but it is the greatest factor in all history for the breaking down of religion in the conscience of mankind.

It is not necessary that all should fully know the doctrinal peculiarities of their denomination to go to martyrdom. If they have one or two doctrines combined with a strong denominational loyalty, they will be in a position to maintain their denominational attitudes and isolations to the scandal of the world. I

take a city of 40,000 — an actual city, though nameless. Here the scandal is advertised in the daily paper with all the pride of a bargain sale, each group hoping to get converts from the others or from the religiously disposed of the community who are unidentified with the churches.

Here is the list in order as it appeared in the paper: "Church of Truth," "First Swedish Lutheran," "First Church of Christ, Scientist," "First Congregational," "First Presbyterian," "Grace M. E.," "Swedish Mission Church," "Armenian Evangelical, Undenominational," "Nevada Avenue Church of Christ," "Arlington Heights Methodist," "Reorganized Latter Day Saints," "First Methodist Episcopal," "Pilgrim Armenian Congregational," "First English Lutheran," "Westminster Presbyterian," "Immanuel Lutheran," "Memorial Baptist," "First Baptist," "Unitarian Church," "Missionary Church Association," "Theosophical Society," "Bethel Pentecostal Church," "Progressive Spiritualist Mission,"

"First Spiritualist Church," "Danish Lutheran Church," "Normal Methodist Church," "First Christian Church," "Church of God," "St. Paul's Methodist Church," "North Side Christian Church," "Cumberland Presbyterian Church," and "First Armenian Presbyterian Church." When I called this condition to the attention of the minister of one of the largest churches in the city, he replied, "And that list is only about half of the varieties we have here."

One of the daily papers of another city carried these announcements in order as follows: "Rosicrucian Church," heading the list with about six inches of advertisement; "Spiritual Church of Revelation," "Church of Ancient Mysteries," "Francis Church of Truth," "Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society," "Society of Applied Psychology," "Home of Truth," "Universal New Thought Studio," "Krotona Institute of Theosophy," "Mazdaznan Message" (having to do with "Health and Breath Cultures"), "Buddhist Psychology," "Master Minds of Prophecy

and History." All these advertisements ran two columns wide.

Beginning on the next column it continued: "Seventh-Day Adventist," "Church of the Open Door," "Temple Baptist," "Wilshire Methodist," and three other Methodist churches, "Church of the People," "Central Church of Christ," "Chirothesian Church of Faith," "First Presbyterian Church," and four other Presbyterian churches, "First Church of Christ, Christian Science," and thirteen other Christian Science churches; "Lutheran Church," nine of the National Council, five of the Joint Synod of Ohio, and three of the Missouri Synod; "Church of the Divine Power," "St. Matthias Episcopal Church," and "St. Paul's Pro-Cathedral," "Wilshire Boulevard Christian Church," "First Congregational Church," and four other Congregational churches, "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints," "Unitarian Church," "International Bible Students' Association," "Practical Psychology," "Philosophical Circulating Library," "King-

dom of Light New-Era Church," and "Sunrise Services."

These advertisements covered nearly the entire page. It would take a courageous mind to thread its way through these entanglements to find Christ, blocked on all sides by denominationalism. The multitudes are saying, "We asked for a loaf and they gave us a stone; we asked for a fish and they gave us a serpent!"

The church must evangelize itself. It has been looking without; it must now look within. World-wide evangelization to the unchurched need not be lessened, if it be done coöperatively, but the church's evangelization of itself is necessary for its salvation. Paul's question on the Damascan heights must come from the lips of the church: "What shall I do, Lord?" There can be but one answer. Denominational Christianity must be abandoned for the Christianity of Christ. The church must be christianized if it would christianize the world. It has thought so long in terms of scandal that it has well nigh lost its spiritual instincts and attitudes.

There are a number of praiseworthy efforts being put forth for the deepening of spiritual life, but the church's evangelization of itself means more than any of these efforts. The church must be won to the ideals of Jesus. There must be conferences, classes, lectures, personal visitation, and any other plan whereby the people can be reached. It must not be for the select few, but it must include the entire membership of the church, from the ministry to the humblest member of the flock, until there is to some extent the rediscovery of living truth applied to the practical problems of this day.

A restudy of one's denomination will not do it. That would hinder rather than help. Neither is the study of good books the solution. That likewise may be a hindrance. It is the study of Christ that is the need of these times, combined with going forth in common sense fellowship with those who believe in Christ, irrespective of denominational prohibitions. We are not to hide nor to pretend, but we are to face the facts and prayerfully and devoutly

find the way of putting more of the Spirit of Christ into modern life. Because it is hard to do at best, we must join hands in a real brotherhood. The church must be christianized.

However much money is raised, however many buildings are erected, however many missionaries are sent abroad, the chief thing of life is the spiritual building — the house of which Christ is the architect, and of which human conduct and character are the materials. Denominationalism must be abolished by a courage and a faith that are unafraid. The American church must have ten thousand such evangelists if the purpose of Christ in the world is to be realized. Christianity must mean more than it does in these times if it would make better times for the next generation.

Can a church that does all possible injury to its enemy be Christian? The purpose of war is to do all possible injury to the enemy and the church has heartily supported war. Against this condition Jesus says, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

that you may be sons of your Father in heaven." It is impossible for denominational Christianity to do this because it is built upon divisive attitudes. Denominational Christianity has been marvelously resourceful in phrasing definitions for all sorts of things, but it has never had the courage to put mutual trust in human conduct, which is the thing that Jesus asked. Had Jesus faltered in this it would have been sufficient evidence that he was not the Christ.

One says that he is a Christian because the hands of a bishop have been upon his head, another because he has been baptized, and another because the Spirit has borne witness with his spirit that he is a child of God. These are all empty reasons, as the world has long ago discovered. The hands of a bishop, a hundred baptisms in the river Jordan, and the recital of a thousand experiences are as shallow as the clamor of the long-ago scribes and Pharisees. If we cannot show appreciation of and kindness to people who have been ugly and hostile to us, we might as well stop there and

not try to hide ourselves behind Catholicism or Protestantism. If our religion is not workable, the naming of some denomination does not enhance its value, whether it be a denomination that worships in a cathedral or one that is on the second floor in a back alley over a stable like unto where Jesus was born.

War is the huge expression of the human hatred that is in the hearts of individuals amid the petty annoyances of the day. The fact that the church has distinguished itself in military achievements not only indicates its departure from Christ, but here lies the secret of its inability to convince the world that it loves either God or man. That it loves some kind of conception of God and that it loves some men are not denied, but that it loves the God whom Jesus revealed and that it loves all men to the extent of good will for them, as he did, is rightly denied by the multitudes that are vaster than those that compose the followers of Christ. Becoming entangled with Jewish patriotism and Roman imperialism — both provincial and exclusive — the church

adopted a standard that necessarily was unknown to Christ and, therefore, misinterpreted him in espousing the cause of war. The church must have nothing to do with war, either as soldiers or chaplains. War can only be scourged out of the portals of the nations by a christianized church.

From the beginning of Christianity to the time of Constantine, or about the first quarter of the fourth century, when the state took over the church, there was but one opinion among Christians regarding war. Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian boldly declared that " the military oath and the baptismal vow are inconsistent with each other, the one being the sign of Christ, the other of the devil." [2]

In Origen's famous controversy with Celsus, in the third century, there was no indication of the slightest letting down of this Christian principle. In those days Christians went to martyrdom at the hands of the state, rather than take up the sword to kill their brothers.

[2] C. J. Cadoux, *The Early Christian Attitude to War.*

Cyprian, Arnobius, Lacantius, and Athanasius maintained the same position. There is no record that any Christian enlisted in the army until the latter part of the second century under the reign of Marcus Aurelius, about A.D. 174, and these were few. On soldiers becoming Christians they usually left the army, as in the instance of Marcellus, who was forthwith sentenced to death at the dictates of the state. Augustine, A.D. 354–430, was the first of the church fathers who at all countenanced defensive war, but he declared that "not to keep peace is to spurn Christ." By A.D. 416, however, the Christians had control of governmental affairs; this so changed their attitude that a law was passed requiring all soldiers to become Christians and forbidding non-Christians to serve in the army.[3]

From that day to this, wholesale murder of men in battle in the name of Christ has been counted among the glories of the church, so that John Morley in the opening chapter of his volume on Voltaire soberly affirms that

[3] C. J. Cadoux, *The Early Christian Attitude to War.*

"more blood has been shed for the cause of Christianity than for any other cause whatsoever." History will eventually declare Voltaire to have been more truly a disciple of Jesus than the Christian ecclesiastics who were the leaders in the wars of that period, as may now be said of Tolstoy in relation to the holy synod which excommunicated him. The theological heresies of Christendom have been mere passing episodes by the side of this mammoth social heresy of hate and murder. It was the adoption of this policy that made possible the Inquisition and the persecutions which have scandalized the name of the church on the pages of history.

There are several things, however, to be taken into consideration regarding the early Christian interpretation of the mind of Jesus. First, there was no distinction in the Roman empire between police service and the service of the soldiers, such as obtains in our times, police duty being then a part of the military. Second, all the soldiers necessary for the army could usually be secured by voluntary enlist-

ment, although conscription was legal if necessary. This, however, was rarely resorted to. When conscription did obtain, instances like the martyrdom of Maximilianus, the twenty-one year old Numidian, A.D. 295, multiplied in the record of Christian martyrdom. Third, the military oath involved some part in the general practice of worship of the emperor, although later this requirement disappeared; but the chief objection of the early Christians to war was usually in their opposition to the shedding of their brothers' blood.

For fifteen hundred years the church was absolutely devoid of conscience relative to the crime of war, except a few voices here and there, such as Peter Waldo, John Wyclif, Francis of Assisi, George Fox, William Penn, William Lloyd Garrison, John Greenleaf Whittier, Leo Tolstoy, the Society of Friends, the Moravians, other small societies of Christians, and many among the Socialists. But the church in its organized capacity was an uncompromising supporter of war. All churches, however ancient and apostolic in creedal

declarations, severed their connection with the early history of Christianity by accepting this war principle. No greater tragedy ever befell the church. It was the temptation which Jesus resisted in the wilderness; it was the temptation to which the church yielded in the open.

Differences will arise between nations as between individuals, and sometimes very sharp differences, but in the instance of individual differences we go to the courts of law, and the national public conscience sustains the law. A great moral resolution has found expression in the ratification of the treaty for the outlawry of war. It is a record for the beginning of a new era, but it is not sufficient in itself. Raw material and foreign investments must be handled upon a higher ethical plane than has characterized the nations of the past. With the nations of the world agreeing to outlaw war, with the service of the World Court, and with the functioning of the League of Nations, the church has a great opportunity to work for moral disarmament. This must come about before

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military armaments can be reduced to the plane of police service among the nations.

To make the abolition of war from our civilization complete it will require a united Christendom. Or shall peace among the nations be an example to lead the church to abolish its denominationalism for unity? The need is for the first, and therefore denominational Christianity must clean its own house by establishing better relations with all the Christians of its household. Before it can preach moral disarmament to the nations and establish an international conscience of good will, it must preach and practice disarmament of ignorance, prejudice, and isolation in its own household and establish permanent relations of Christian brotherhood. This is an obligation from which it cannot escape without paying a heavy penalty for its unfaithfulness.

"Europe will blaze up again into another war for an absolute certainty," says Lieutenant Commander Kenworthy, "if the present condition of things continues. Nor does the danger alone threaten the Old World. Failing

some such plan I believe a terrible conflict directly involving the British Empire, America, and Japan, will break out during the next twenty years, and that it will spread and involve half of the rest of the world. The seeds of this and other conflicts have been sown and are germinating. Such conflicts will utterly destroy the civilization and the culture that we have developed. It will ruin all these nations and impoverish their peoples as the last war impoverished Germany, France, Italy, and Russia. What will become of the boasted American standard of living? It will be reduced to the level of the Poles and Austrians after the last great war. The last war used up the savings and accumulated wealth of a hundred years of European progress, work, and culture."[4] Is denominational Christianity able to check this impending catastrophe by cultivating an international conscience of good will and presenting to the world a united brotherhood of its own household? If Christianity fails to establish such a conscience it

[4] J. M. Kenworthy, *Peace or War?*

loses its day of opportunity from which it will sink into the scorn of men and the judgment of God.

Can a church whose ideals of brotherhood are beneath those of Christ be Christian? It may not attain to those ideals, but it must contend for them. The principles that apply to the abolition of war likewise apply to all other conditions where brotherhood is involved. The demand to-day is for righteousness — something that can be shown only where it actually exists. It is no namby-pamby thing, but it has in it all the virility of the noblest manhood. Christ is the teacher among men. He calls employer and employee to himself for instruction. The proof of a man's Christianity is found in his conduct toward his fellows, whether he be an employer or an employee. Money has no right to dominate over labor; neither has labor the right to dominate over money. These are here to coöperate.

Christ taught his followers to be brothers — reconciled brotherhood by the infilling of his own Spirit — and the world waits to see it.

Its coming is more thrilling than any achievement of science. While the world waits the burden grows heavier. So long as the employer cares nothing for the employee except for his labor, by which the employer makes his money, and the employee cares nothing for his employer except for the money he receives from his employer, the chasm between employer and employee will widen. The only bridge that can span it is that which has written upon every arch, and pier, and girder: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them." The arch and pier and girder of that bridge are not to be of wood and iron, but of purposes, understandings, appreciations. These are the things that tie men together.

The rights of labor are as sacred as those of capital. Labor has as much right to form unions as capital has to combine. Labor has the same right to set its prices for its skill as the manufacturer has for his goods. But the competition of these is hurtful to both. There must come into modern industry the standard

of Christ expressed in terms of practical brotherhood. Social justice is sometimes regarded with grave suspicion because denominational Christianity is incapable of molding a social conscience. Nevertheless the call of social justice is as old as the Jewish prophets and its practice is necessary to convince the world of the worth of Christianity.

Were the church a christianized brotherhood its presence in any community would make it difficult, if not impossible, to put over any act of social injustice. The struggle between capital and labor will likely intensify with the years. Hardly another generation will pass before these great factors in our civilization will come into severer conflict than they have in the past. Neither can be lost to the other because they are supplementary factors.

The growing discouragement of this condition is that the church is far removed in the solution of these problems because of its entanglement in denominational Christianity. It has not learned to suffer in making adjustments of its own inequalities and attitudes.

Consequently it is unprepared to suffer in making social adjustments in modern industry. Its philosophy is as far afield as its theology. In this conflict, however, there are Christians who will not hesitate to line up with men rather than with things, even though it may mean the loss of reputation and living. Things must ever be secondary to men. It was no accident that Jesus was a carpenter.

Long established customs in the social world must be overturned. Christ must be the teacher of those inquiring the way, for the lights of the church are flickering in the dark night of her trial. Great social wrongs need strong characters to scourge them out of the portals of our civilization by the Spirit of Christ — lives that do not count life dear except it is lived in the building of a world whose sympathetic bonds of brotherhood are real factors in making a better world for men and women to live in. Let us have but one thing to be afraid of and that thing the death of the Spirit in ourselves.

We are now in the midst of an unequal

fight. The forces of the world are too strong for the weakened forces of denominational Christianity. There are a great many indications of Christian strength in the world but they are largely interdenominational or among those fellowships that are outside of the church. Denominational Christianity, strong as it may be numerically and financially, is decidedly a weaker factor in our present day civilization for making permanent in the thought of the world the standards and ideals of Jesus. The urge of these times is some method by which to make effective Christian life in the nations of the world, so that the most imminent task of present day Christianity is the union of the church of Christ.

It is becoming more and more evident to all believers that the union of Christendom is not only in the thought and purpose of God for the world, but it is necessary for God's conquest of the world. There are few leaders in the various denominations that would dissent from this statement. For the present we are disagreeing as to how it should be done,

many stoutly standing by our various positions, some ancient and some modern. Perhaps we are not yet ready for union. We are in the period of its academic discussion. When we move to the field of its religious possibility, which we are rapidly approaching, our attitudes will be changed. In the meantime the masses of Christians are becoming more and more impatient with our artificial barriers of separation and are thinking their way to a reasonable appreciation of fellow Christians. This is a powerful factor making for Christian unity. Out of it may come such advancement toward the ideal of Jesus as to leave behind ecclesiastical dignitaries and under-officials of denominations, who, in many instances, are the least responsive elements for unity in the church of Christ.

What was years ago a chimerical dream is now taking on the form of reality. Travel and education have been great aids to observing the church and its task from new angles. People read in the Scriptures about the evil of strife, faction, and division among brethren;

but, like many other things in the Scriptures, they were passed by as belonging to that period and not this. Out of practical experience many now see the waste of strife, faction, and division and are sustained in their growing convictions by those scriptural admonitions that are as applicable to these times as they were to the times in which they were written. These things are bad, whether they be in business, where men are working for their living, or in church, where they are blessed as special providences of God for the elect! An intelligent world is seeing that these things are opposed to the spirit and genius of Christianity.

It is no easy task. Tremendous problems face every move. If it were simply getting together a special group of the open-minded of the various denominations that would be easy; but that is not the problem. Many of these are already together and are ready for action. There is a large element of denominationalists which already have joined with the Corinthian Jews, saying, "These people are proposing to conduct the affairs of the church

contrary to the way we do"; or, with Demetrius, saying, "Our church is in danger of losing its distinctiveness and the work of our forefathers forgotten."

Alliance with either one of these groups is enough to stir any denomination to its depths as it did when these words were first uttered. There are Catholics by the thousands who would bitterly resent this, as would other thousands among Episcopalians, Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Disciples, Lutherans, down to the two hundredth in the denominational list. The witch of Endor is still popular. To save the denomination she is besought to call up the dead forbears — the denominational leaders of long ago. Their faces and utterances live again in the denominational journals to save the denomination from becoming a part of a united church! Saul and Samuel would again be actors. Therefore breaches might widen and multiply. It is a serious problem.

But it is a Christian problem. Christ came to announce the kingdom of God. De-

nominational Christianity has stood in the way of the purposes of God for the good of mankind. We are dealing with Christian men and women who represent the flower of the human race. To bring these Christians together into a real brotherhood is the paramount issue of this day. It will take years to establish forbearance and remove prejudice. And these years are now crowded with hopeful processes. The exasperated protests of denominationalists cannot stay the advance.

All denominations have their traditions and these are sacred heirlooms. Out of these traditions have come honorable convictions and dishonorable prejudices. These cannot be thrust aside by the wave of the hand. They are deeply rooted. They require time and patience in their treatment. There is no denomination but quotes most freely from its own books, its own journals, its own scriptural interpretations, and the general teachings of its forbears. It is a condition from which it is most difficult to escape, however deeply we may desire it; but with the coming

of larger freedom in fellowship with all Christians there will come a desire for a wider brotherhood than any denomination can offer. Men and women will think and act out of new experiences, with new phrases, and new fellowships for which their denominational forbears, perhaps, prepared them. For, if they were prophets, there can be found in their utterances those finer thoughts that went beyond the denominational limitations of their day.

The world must be christianized. The arrogance of infallibility, whether Catholic or Protestant, is weakening with the coming of a larger intelligence. Educate the people to think, and thought will find those sacred paths that mean most for a plodding race of men and women. No denomination can cast stones at another. Every denominational house is built of glass. We have all done wrong either in doctrinal practices or in spiritual discourtesy, or in both. The ignorant boasting of our denominations is both vulgar and unspiritual. "He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord."

The only standard is Christ. His prayer

was for the unity of his followers. When these substituted denominationalism for Christianity, becoming hostile among themselves until hatred among Christians became the scandal of the world, it was a bold denial on their part of his right to build the kingdom of God, irrespective of their loud creedal pronouncements. "If anyone declares, 'I love God,' and yet hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who will not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot possibly love the God whom he has never seen." [5]

We have sought by every conceivable method to cover up the past sins of the church as well as the present day sins, making ourselves as comfortable as possible; but the time is here and now when Christians must uncover all sins and be unafraid to abandon those attitudes which have substituted denominational comforts for struggle and suffering, until the church, now "sick, on her dying bed," shall hear the voice of Jesus say, "Arise and walk!"

[5] I John 4: 20 (Moffatt's translation).

VII

What is the Hope for Cure of this Scandal?

There is no physical disease but that physicians are working courageously for its cure, because the scientific mind sees that disease has no right here. It is no more the will of God that people should be sick than that people should sin. Our word "holy" is from the Anglo-Saxon word *halig,* which means health. God is healthy and, therefore, it is the will of God that everybody should be healthy in body, mind, and soul. However, in consequence of customary usage, "health" usually refers to the body and "holiness" to spiritual conditions, but these words mean the same. The Scripture translations emphasize the holiness of God and the possibility of all mankind sharing that holiness. Paul affirms that the fruit of our faith in Jesus Christ is holiness, that holiness has to do with behavior, and that holi-

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ness is a state of health for growth into moral goodness.

The whole medical world is working for the cure of cancer. It is the concern of every forward looking physician and surgeon. Nevertheless in all the advance in medical science no cure has yet been found for this disease of civilization. But a cure will be found. The same thing is true of denominationalism. With all that has been done in education and with the fine instances of Christians in all denominations, one wonders why more has not been done to cure Christianity of its scandal of denominationalism. However, we need not be discouraged. This day lends hope for its cure beyond that of any other day.

The human mind will not always be false. Good people have defended denominationalism just as good people have declared that all sickness is the visitation of God, although sometimes those same good people will take a pill to keep away God's visit and sometimes, on the rise of their better selves, they long for fellowship with the whole church. A scholarship and

a piety may hold to these false positions, but their number is not so large as it used to be. We need to be patient with those who differ from us. There is no need to fear, no need to make short cuts, no need to be in a hurry. "He that believeth shall not make haste" is an opportune sentence from one of the Jewish prophets. We no longer put our major emphasis on whether Jesus fulfills Jewish prophecy in being the Christ, but whether he is able to fulfill the will of God in establishing such a spiritual social order among his followers on earth as will make brotherhood the expression of God among men.

There has never been a time that there have not been voices pleading for conciliatory attitudes among Christians. And frequently they have been followed by definite movements to that end. More than a hundred years after the apostolic period the episcopate arose in an attempt to hold the church together. With it came the controversy as to authority and basis of unity. Cyprian and others argued for the episcopate of the universal church with the

equality of the bishops as the successors of the apostles. Others argued that the only means by which that unity could be brought about and maintained was by the recognition of Peter and his successors as the head of the church. These positions were clearly defined. Do authority and unity center in the episcopate, including all the bishops of the whole church as the successors of the apostles? Or do authority and unity center solely in the bishop of Rome as the successor of Peter?

Bitter quarrels extended through the centuries. While both argued for successorship, which, at best, has always been hazy, both positions became severely impaired. Rome built up the greatest ecclesiastical machinery in history, but was not able to maintain authority and unity. Under her attempted rule came the widest divisions in Christendom — first she lost the larger part of the Eastern section of Christendom and, several hundred years later, she lost a large part of the Western section — so that her claim to authority and unity is no more than the authority and unity of the

Methodist Episcopal Church, having authority and unity in her own fold. Of course in numbers Catholics exceed Methodists, as they do in age, but that does not affect the point of comparison in that both have their authority and unity limited solely to their own folds.

On the other hand, the episcopate broke to pieces in many parts. Although centuries have intervened, the episcopates have not been able to effect a reconciliation and are about as widely separated as the thirteen divisions of the Baptist Church. Therefore, they have been unable to show that the episcopate is an organ for unity, except in theory and in this they and Rome are about equal. The old controversy between the primacy of Rome and the general episcopate is kept alive by the redefining of these theories.

Granting that the claim of apostolic succession can be sustained, which is very doubtful, what merit is there in it? The claim that Jesus was a lineal descendant of Abraham, Jacob, and David would have had no merit whatever if he had not been better than these.

Catholics and Episcopalians, with all their claim to apostolic succession, are not one whit better than Methodists and Baptists — no better in their home life, no more honest in the markets of the world, no more honorable in their citizenship, no more spiritual in their conduct. Then wherein lies the merit in this controversy that has dragged through the centuries? The weary world wants something better than any of these churches has produced. Long ago Bernard sighed and said, "Who will grant me before I die, to see the church of God, such as she has been in the primitive times?"

After Protestantism was established, as a result of Rome's inability to hold the Western section of the Church together, George Calixtus was the earliest of modern apostles of reconciliation. Through his efforts the conference of Thorn was held, of which he said, "If I may but help toward the healing of our schisms, I would shrink from no cares and night watchings, no efforts and no dangers."[1] The

[1] Dowding's *Life and Correspondence of George Calixtus.*

conference was composed of thirty-seven Lutherans, twenty-seven Catholics, and fifteen from the Reformed Church. On Calixtus' being seen walking arm in arm with a Catholic priest, the Lutherans denied him a seat in the conference. The conference lasted for months and broke up in disorder. His proposal as a basis of unity, however, was the New Testament as interpreted by the Apostles' Creed.

The ancient creeds have from that day to this been suggested in many instances as a basis for unity. While they have the authority of long usage and the imprimatur of the church councils, "they have not the authority of the words of Christ himself," and yet it is the unity of his church that we are discussing. It does look as though the verbal expression of our united Christian faith "must be found in some authentic affirmations of the Lord himself." [2] Besides, all these ancient creeds are out of date. No one of them can be repeated without reservation, much in them being rejected by modern thought. They present an interesting enigma:

[2] H. D. A. Major, *The London Times.*

Why do they hold precedence over the words of Christ?

If we are to define our Christian faith in other words than those of Christ, why not take the words of Paul who, when all has been said, understood Christ better than any other man that ever lived? If one must have creedal declarations, why not put them in the realm of poetry, where they would become helps rather than hindrances in the prose of life? And what is the ethical effect on one's soul when he constantly repeats some dogmatic statement in the sacredness of public worship before God, which he publicly says that he believes and which he privately does not believe? It is no wonder that we have been reaping a harvest of infidelity and crime. Stillingfleet, one time Anglican bishop of Worcester, says, "For the church to require more than Christ himself did, or make the condition of her communion more than our Savior did of discipleship, is wholly unwarranted." [3]

With John Locke's empiricism and Jo-

[3] Edward Stillingfleet, *Irenicum.*

hannes Coccejus' new method of biblical criticism as his background, Alexander Campbell, a Presbyterian, became the leader of a movement in America for the unity of the church, taking the name "Disciples of Christ." He argued for the restoration of primitive Christianity as the basis for unity, saying, "The plan is divine. It is ordained by God; and, better still, it is already revealed. . . . Nothing is essential to the conversion of the world but the union and coöperation of Christians. Nothing is essential to the union of Christians but the apostles' teaching or testimony. . . . Neither truth alone nor union alone is sufficient to subdue the unbelieving nations; but truth and union combined are omnipotent. They are omnipotent, for God is in them and with them, and has consecrated and blessed them for this very purpose."[4]

Along with their emphasis on Christian unity by a return to primitive Christianity, the chief contribution of the Disciples was their simplifying of religion in passing by creeds and

[4] Alexander Campbell, *The Christian System.*

systems of theology in order to bring people publicly to confess their personal faith in the Living Christ, which, however, is now largely the common practice among many Protestants. Said Walter Rauschenbusch, " This movement was launched against real American evils, against the prevalent sectarianism, against the insistence on creedal statements, and against the elaborate and often untrue accounts of religious emotions demanded of converts as an outcome of American revivalism. The movement was essentially a reformatory effort to simplify religion." [5]

The natural and urgent corollary from the simplifying of Christianity was for the unifying of the divided church, which was the ideal in the minds of the Campbells and those associated with them, but the Disciples became involved in the form of baptism as a primary factor and very nearly wrecked one of the greatest opportunities in the history of American Christianity. By making baptism by im-

[5] Walter Rauschenbusch, *The Rochester Theological Seminary Bulletin,* May, 1917.

mersion the *sine qua non* to church membership, a great controversy was precipitated over a form which soon developed into a dogma — the very principle which Campbell severely attacked. He had a perfect right to choose baptism by immersion for himself and to advise others to do likewise. My grandfather in the Church of Scotland believed that it was the primitive form and was baptized by immersion; I also believe it and practice it, but I cannot think of tying up church membership with a form of baptism or the form of anything else.

It is a question whether any man or group of men in this day has the moral right to make any form the *sine qua non* to church membership. Not that baptism or the Lord's Supper should be dispensed with — by no means — but they must be regarded as of less value than the Spirit who gave them and whose value is tested in the fruit of spiritual experience of human life. Besides, contention for forms usually has been the cause of bitter controversies, which have always been hurtful to the Spirit. Becoming proponents of a scriptural

form, the Disciples necessarily became legalistic in their general interpretations of Scripture. This later caused division in their own ranks, thereby again greatly weakening their appeal for Christian unity, until, in many instances, it almost passed out of their thinking. As the result, in their public gatherings and publications Christian unity is now no more to the front than in the public gatherings and publications of many other denominations.

And, biologically and spiritually, all forms, however ancient, are subject to reconstitution if their vitality is to be preserved. Hence, the projecting of a form, as one of the necessary elements in the basis of unity, impaired the Disciples' contribution toward reconciliation in the divided church, making them a denomination rivaling the other denominations of Christendom; whereas they might have become a semi-interdenominational movement, testifying by the simplification of religion to a bewildered world and, likewise, testifying by personal contacts in conference with other de-

nominations to the necessity of a united Christendom.

An opportunity fell to me some years ago (when I was president of the annual gathering of the Disciples) to make an attempt to put this plan into operation, but, as popular as it was with some of the Disciples, it became unpopular with others, causing it to be abandoned, although it was popular with many in those denominations with which contacts were formed by conferences. In all denominations, however, there are many Christians who are eager to help in the cure of the scandal of denominationalism. The ideal of a united Christendom is a living factor in the conscience of Christianity and some day it will burst like blossoms in the garden that over night burst their calyxes into full bloom.

History is replete with appeals and movements for the abolition of denominationalism. After the Thirty Years' War, when Catholics and Protestants were slowly discovering that they were permanently rooted in the thought of European life, and that they must find a

way to live together or again try to destroy each other, the philosopher Leibnitz was the prophet of his time in seeking to find a way to live together. He and Bossuet, the Catholic bishop, opposite in many things, sought to think together in terms of philosophic adjustment for a religious basis of union, but all doors remained locked.

Calvin sought for Protestant unity on the basis of reconciling the interpretations of the Lord's Supper and later urged a world council for the reunion of Christendom. John Dury advocated the abolition of party names and the establishment of national churches. Dupin proposed the unity of the episcopates, including the episcopate of Rome, but the pope censured him and he was later dismissed by royal decree from the Sorbonne.

Hugo Grotius lent his great intellect to the cause of a united church. John Milton wrote about it. Richard Baxter rarely preached a sermon without some mention of it. Scores of others advocated Christian unity. John Wesley, in the opening of his *Notes on the New*

Testament, says, "Would to God that all party names and unscriptural phrases and forms, which have divided the Christian world, were forgot; and that we might all agree to sit down together, as humble, loving disciples, at the feet of our common Master, to hear his word, to imbibe his Spirit, and to transcribe his life in our own!" Multitudes of humble and devout followers of our Lord have been bewildered in the confusion and divisions of the church, and have sighed for her peace.

About seventy-five years ago interdenominational movements began to rise in America and Europe. The Evangelical Alliance had a healthy influence. In 1908 the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America was organized for the coöperation of the various Protestant denominations in service, rather than in an attempt to unite upon definitions of theology and polity. Its ideals have been incorporated in the thought of Protestants in other nations, so that federation is to-day the most powerful factor in the world making for Protestant unity.

Protestantism erred in not taking the advice of its great leader, Martin Luther, who insisted on the use of the term "Christian" above that of any other terms for designating those who held to Protestant principles. Protestant federation, however, is already expressing this idea in the use of the term "churches of Christ" for its federations. If the term "Protestant" could be supplanted by the term "Christian" it would be no reflection on Catholics any more than their use of the word "Catholic" is a reflection on Protestantism, because Protestantism is now as catholic as the Catholic Church; but the chief value would be in changing from an attitude of protest to an attitude of appreciation, bearing the name Christian and looking at all other Christians from the view-point of Christ.

In 1910 the Protestant Episcopal Church in America appointed a commission on a World Conference on Faith and Order. Other denominations were invited to join them in this call for a world conference. The Anglican Church, the Eastern Orthodox churches, most

of the Protestant churches, and other churches appointed commissions to coöperate. It was regretted that the Catholic Church declined the invitation, although that church is not indifferent to this cause, having established a new order called the Monks of Unity, also lectureships in some of their universities, and they are putting out much literature on this subject, all of which is an appeal to come to Rome. This is more bold, but not unlike that of many other denominations, who think the same but are less bold. But their refusal to sit with other Christians in a conference for understanding is not only an injury to themselves, but lowers their standard of Christianity in the eyes of an intelligent world. Some day they will have a pope who will discard this arrogant attitude for that of understanding and appreciation.

However, the preliminary World Conference was held at Geneva in 1920. For the first time the Eastern Orthodox churches sent representatives to coöperate with other Christians for the unity of Christendom. The general conference was held at Lausanne in 1927

under the leadership of Bishop Charles H. Brent, as chairman, and Dr. A. E. Garvie, as deputy chairman, men of unusual catholicity and grace. It marked the turning of the road for better understanding among Christians.

In 1925 came the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work at Stockholm under the leadership of the Archbishop of Upsala, a man of extraordinary gifts. It sought to emphasize the union of the churches in common practical work and to insist that the principles of the Gospel be applied to the solution of contemporary social and international problems. Its influence was far-reaching. The Baltimore Conference of the Christian Unity League, 1928, an unofficial movement, had nearly all Christendom represented on its enrollment, including Baptists, Catholics, Congregationalists, Disciples, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Reformed, Unitarians, Universalists, and fourteen other denominations. This is the first conference where Catholics and Unitarians met with other groups in the interest of a united Christendom.

Also another chapter was opened by henceforth associating the observance of the Lord's Supper with Christian unity conferences. About the same time the Ohio Pastors' Convention, affiliated with the State Federation, including a thousand pastors and nearly thirty denominations, also observed the Lord's Supper together. The San Francisco Conference had a similar program.

Missionary statesmanship has begun to recognize that a denominational church, working in its separate capacities, is incompetent to fulfill the mission of Christ to the world. It simply cannot be done. After two thousand years we are facing the fact that there is not a nation which is wholly Christian. We are also facing the fact that it is poor statesmanship on the part of missionary boards to send missionaries separately to non-Christian lands.

Recently I wrote to about two dozen missionary boards inquiring if it were not possible to form a common missionary board, among Protestants with denominational missionary boards as auxiliaries, and henceforth have all

missionaries go out from this common missionary board. Most of the responses were sympathetic to the idea, but the majority thought the time was not ripe for such action. Perhaps it is not, but sin is ripe for its onward march. The most stinging condemnation of our denominationalism is that, in many instances, the converts in non-Christian lands understand Christ better in the fellowship of his followers than the missionary boards and conventions that send out the missionaries. The missionary fields are giving a world-wide emphasis to Christian fellowship and will send missionaries to us for the evangelization of the churches in the interest of a united Christendom.

The International Missionary Conference at Jerusalem, 1928, opened a new chapter in Christian understanding, being "the first meeting ever held," says Dr. Mott, "in which the representatives of the older churches and the younger churches met on a fifty-fifty basis; that is, in which the representatives of the churches of Europe, North America, and Aus-

tralasia, which send missionaries, were represented in approximately the same proportion and number as the churches of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, which were planted by missionaries.

"This becomes all the more striking when we recall that as recently as the Edinburgh gathering [1910] there were only about a score of Nationals representing these indigenous churches in mission lands among a total of over 1,200 regular delegates." [6] These transactions and others like them indicate a rising tide and there is no power that can turn that tide back.

Christians in all the denominations are not only feeling the awkwardness of their separations, but they are thinking toward each other. Methodists are making approaches to Presbyterians and others. Episcopalians are making approaches to Methodists and Presbyterians. Congregationalists and Christians have gone far enough to submit plans of their respective commissions for ratification of the union of the two denominations by their next national

[6] John R. Mott, *The Christian Union Quarterly.*

assemblies. Smaller groups are, likewise, thinking in terms of Christian unity. The atmosphere between the denominations has become less frosty because of the incoming of understanding and appreciation.

There are no objections but that there are instances of their being satisfactorily met. Perhaps the most notable, and that which has included more delicate problems, is the union of the Methodists, Congregationalists, and a majority of the Presbyterians of Canada when these became the United Church of Canada. The courts settled the matters of vested interests and the theological problems were adjusted by joint conferences with twenty years of preparation back of them. It was unfortunate that all the Presbyterians did not go into the union as the Methodists and Congregationalists did. It was an instance where a lesser loyalty prevailed with some over the larger loyalty, which in time will fade out with all backward thinking.

Millions of dollars have been given for the building up of denominationalism; other mil-

lions will be given for the breaking down of denominationalism. The William H. Hoover Christian Unity Trust is the first permanent endowment for this cause. After Andrew Carnegie endowed the Church Peace Union, which was for the abolition of war through the channels of the churches, he was thinking of endowing another foundation for the abolition of denominationalism, but his death cut short his plans. It would be significant if a Christian outside of the church led in this adventure. But as valuable as money and organization appear to be, neither of these is to be compared to the Spirit of Christ operating in the lives of men and women. This would make for outlets beyond calculation.

For centuries an infallible church and an infallible Bible have been hurled against each other with no profit to either, except a general discount of the infallibility of both. History is the witness that infallibility is an illusion. But we need both the church and the Bible to lead us to Christ. Neither the church nor the Bible can hold the primary place. Christ is

beyond both the church and the Bible. He is not an absentee Christ, not a dead Christ, but the Living Christ, whose place cannot be usurped by ecclesiastical organizations, however good the ecclesiastics may be, nor by a book, however incomparable it may be — Christ who is alive forevermore — my Christ and the Christ of all who call upon him — "Christ in you the hope of glory."

Why should a group of theologians be infallible any more than a group of astronomers? Nevertheless, there are multitudes who still believe in an infallible church and likewise multitudes who still believe in an infallible Bible, but there are other multitudes who believe in something better and these are making for the abolition of denominationalism.

Christ has had his witnesses through all history — not infallible witnesses. Sometimes they were in good standing in their churches, other times they were heretics, being in some instances cast out; but among these Christ had his witnesses, with whom we claim fellowship. Likewise those who knew Christ in the flesh

bore witness to him on the written page — not infallible records, but it is interesting that in the New Testament both those who knew him in the flesh and Paul, who knew him only in the Spirit, make up the testimony of that incomparable volume.

Whether biblical criticism be conservative or radical is irrelevant. It has brought a new understanding of the Bible, a totally different attitude from that which was common fifty or seventy-five years ago, but making it a far more vital book in our experiences. The spiritual certainty of those persons who knew Christ either in the flesh or in the Spirit, as interpreted in the New Testament, as well as those who, in succeeding centuries, knew Christ only in the Spirit, as interpreted in their lives, make unanswerable arguments for the spiritual certainty of Christianity. Over against infallibility is life, life, life — a life hid with Christ in God! It would be entirely unintelligible to think of the church coming into existence if it had only great pronouncements, authoritative attitudes, and sacred forms, but there was a

living power which came out of those mysterious contacts with God and which made real that life among men that was potential in the character of God.

In the midst of our denominational entanglements Dr. Otto asks, "Is Christianity at all and in a strict sense Jesus' religion? That is, is the religion we know to-day as Christianity, with its peculiar and unique content of belief and feeling, standing in all its historic greatness and supremacy when measured against other religions, with all its power to-day over the hearts and consciences of men to elevate or to excite, to launch accusation or confer benediction, to attract or to repel — is this religion still in its essence and inner meaning the same thing as the simple, unpretentious religion and form of piety which Jesus himself had, which he himself aroused and 'founded' in the circle of those little heart-stirred bands of men in that out-of-the-way corner of the world, Galilee? . . . Is it a case of development and evolution, or rather merely of continual transmutation, the influx of some-

thing quite different, which one man laments as a perversion, a second admires as a welcome substitution, and a third merely records as a simple historical fact?" [7]

There must come an unafraid answering of these questions. There are such indications. The denominations are coming to penitential attitudes — not all of them and not officially, but individuals in all of them. Penitence is more vital in our pathway for Christianity's cure of the scandal of denominationalism than any other single factor. Denominationalism destroyed Christian brotherhood; in penitence it must be restored.

The name of John Calvin is somewhat connected with the burning of Michael Servetus. They differed theologically. No monument in all Europe so stirred me as the granite shaft on the heights of Champel in Geneva. On one side was inscribed the simple fact that on that spot Michael Servetus died at the stake, October 27, 1553, being born in the village of Agrogan, September 29, 1511. On the oppo-

[7] Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy.*

site side is this inscription: "We, the respectful and grateful sons of Calvin, our great reformer, condemning his error, which was one of his age, and holding firmly to the liberty of conscience, according to the true principles of the Reformation and of the Gospel, have erected this expiatory monument, October 27, 1903." The erecting of this monument was an act of extraordinary courage. When I asked Dr. J. Eugene Choisy, professor of church history in the University of Geneva, chairman of the committee, why it was done, he said, "We had to do it to retain our self-respect."

That granite shaft on Champel is a beacon light to all Christendom. It cannot be stared out of countenance. There are yet ten thousand other expiatory monuments to be set up by the denominations of the world. The Eastern Orthodox will set up theirs, the Catholics will set up theirs, the Anglicans will set up theirs, the Protestants will set up theirs, all other Christians will set up theirs. They all may not have burned their opponents at the

stake, but they did that which is just as stinging as fire when they bore false witness with their tongues and pens, sometimes killing those from whom they differed, as Kipling said of Englishmen during the Boer war, "killing Kruger with your mouth."

These expiatory monuments are already in process of building, not necessarily in granite, but in those more durable materials such as friendly approaches, rewriting of church history, and condemnation of those awkward attitudes in our denominational life. It has been only in recent years that a man could dissent from some theological or ethical position in his own denomination and retain his fellowship there, but it is a common occurrence now. Penitential attitudes for denominational wrongs!

The universal rise of political democracies is breaking down age-long barriers between nations and changing the face of the political world. When we are occasionally reminded that democracies have failed, it is well to remember that as a matter of fact democracies

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have just started. When the political democracies of the world are as old as the monarchic governments of history, then we can talk of their comparative merits and demerits. But their rise is one of the most significant events in history. We are moving out of the shadow of ancient and medieval history, which affects both the political and religious governments of the world.

The papacy and the episcopates are remnants of monarchic governments of ancient and medieval history in their contention for rule by divine right. If separated from these attitudes and theories both episcopacy and the priesthood may find a permanent place in the spiritual leadership of our modern life, for superintendencies over areas is a good business principle and a priesthood, freed from ritualism and fictitious authority, is desperately needed in the increasing complexity of a civilization that is pathetically helpless in its search for the spiritual adjustments of the times. Being religious institutions, however, which are always slower to change, both the papacy

and the episcopates will continue long after the political monarchies of the world have passed away, not in any effete condition either, but vigorously ministering to large constituencies in all the nations of the world. It would not be surprising if Catholics — the most monarchic of all the episcopates — moved to the place of outnumbering in the democracy of the United States all the Protestant denominations combined.

But in its form the church has invariably followed the political tendencies of history. Consequently the trend of the church is toward democracy; but, as to what form of democracy the church will take, it is not a matter of primary importance. It may assume a democracy with some of the monarchic elements retained and later pass into a genuine democracy, for Jesus was the greatest democrat of history. However conscientiously various forms of government are set forth as divinely appointed, when all is said and done we must come to see that no form of government can ever be primary.

There is but one primary factor and that is the Spirit of Christ. If Protestant unity, which must come first, should establish a Protestant hierarchy, or, on the union of the whole church, there should be established a Christian hierarchy, in either event there would be another Reformation in terms of religious experience or another Renaissance in terms of a new discovery of beauty and reality.

But history rarely repeats itself, if ever. An ecclesiastical hierarchy could not function successfully through many centuries in the atmosphere of the political democracies of the world. One crisis may follow another, but all will make for the establishment of Christian democracy, which emphasizes the common duties of life in contradistinction to political democracy, which emphasizes the common rights of life.

Scientific theology and ecclesiastical authority represent opposites in Christendom. They appear to be incompatible. Every time they clash it is a challenge for each to think again. When they get to know each other they

will not be so far apart as they appear to be. Every flight to the North Pole is a parable to teach us that attempts should be made to adjust Christian extremes, and extremes that are the least and in the most remote parts of Christendom.

The reunited church of the future must be wide enough to include Friends and Unitarians and Catholics and all who claim discipleship with Jesus Christ. Who would close the door to William Penn, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Francis of Assisi? The gauge must be set by the mind and Spirit of him who said, "He who is not against us is for us."

We have so far turned the corner in our thinking regarding uniformity. We are now thinking in terms of unity in diversity. Wider fellowships are in progress. Christian attitudes are supplanting denominational attitudes. An intelligent pew is speaking to the pulpit and the pulpit in turn is adventurous in thought and experimentation.

No one can work side by side with another in the same cause without discovering new un-

derstandings in brotherhood. Between a thousand and fifteen hundred community churches have been organized in America, many of these churches having in their membership a dozen or more denominations, sometimes including Catholics and Protestants. Christian unity literature is multiplying. A library of five hundred volumes, written in the last twenty-five years, is a fair register of the interest in abolishing denominationalism for a united Christendom. Voices for reconciliation are heard in all denominations and in all the languages of the world. The hope of Christianity's cure of the scandal of denominationalism lies with the unafraid.

Vicariousness has a new meaning for us. Into its mystery is the pathway for the recognition of the equality of all Christians before God. In a well cultivated feeling of brotherliness we build a real fellowship based upon what our present age knows of God and to what degree our present age is willing to practice religion as interpreted by Jesus Christ in the light of modern biblical scholarship.

Multitudes are thinking in these terms and, with their thinking, there must come (1) a frank facing of the scandal of our denominationalism, (2) a willingness to work side by side with all Christians, (3) the practice of prayer for and with all Christians, seeking equal blessings upon all, (4) the recognition of the equality of all Christians before God with all its consequences, including worship, membership, conferences, and so forth, (5) the rewriting of church history with its new revaluations, (6) the reasonableness of unity in diversity, (7) the recognition of the contributions of the past and the present to Christianity, (8) the experience of trusting all who trust Christ, (9) the abolition of denominational institutions by interdenominationalizing them, and (10) adventures in Christian brotherhood, irrespective of protests, under the discipleship of Jesus, who says, "By this everyone will recognize that you are my disciples if you have love one for another." These are common sense principles.

There can be no real objection to the prac-

ticing of any one of these principles except it be to save denominationalism, which is dependent upon the practice of the opposite of all herein affirmed. But some such principles as these must be put into operation if Christianity is ever to be cured of its scandal of denominationalism. In their practice there must necessarily come into us a new power by which to overcome the evil we now face and in which we are so pathetically entangled.

Beyond these visible observations is the invisible God. In his universe are variety and unity. It is a perpetual parable for the conscience of mankind. In the exercise of ideals, attitudes, and purposes we climb out of our sordid entanglements into harmony with the universe. God is speaking to the hearts and minds of mankind. Jesus is alive. He is our Brother and we are trying to think in terms of brotherhood rather than in terms of kings and kingdoms. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are."

How false and artificial is our denominationalism in the presence of the idealism expressed in the prayer of Jesus! Let my denomination be forgot, but my love for Christ must consume every suspicious and unbrotherly attitude toward other Christians until I see in all Christians the reflection of him. Not until then can it be said that he has won me to himself, for those in whom I see Christ are mine as he is mine. Then shall pass between him and us that bond of discipleship binding the whole church to himself, for which he prayed when he said, "May they all be one! As thou, Father, are in me and I in thee, so may they be in us — that the world may believe thou hast sent me."

What we are now and what Jesus prayed for us to be is no more impossible than the development of our barbarian forbears into Christian men and women. The individual follower is charged to reproduce a life like Jesus'. Then denominationalism must go as human slavery has gone, as ignorance among the masses is going, as every other unjust thing

must go, and be so abhorred in its going that it will not attempt re-establishment. I have sought to be only one among others standing at the window of the soul, wiping away the cobwebs and dust in order that I and my brethren may see Christ less obscured and hold undisputed fellowship with all those who see in him the Redeemer of the world. It does not take a great man to be a Christian, but it takes all of him. Paul says, "For me to live is Christ" — for me to live at all is to reproduce Christ in the body of flesh, this temple of the Spirit. Courageous adventure!

Christian brotherhood must come. A united Christendom attaining the ideal of brotherhood is the spiritual possession of mankind. If my phrasings for the abolition of the scandal of denominationalism have been unhappily chosen I have no contention over phrases. I am contending for Christian principles. I have sought neither to offend nor to please. I cannot say with Guignebert of the Sorbonne that "the western peoples have,

strictly speaking, never been Christians," [8] for there have been and are Christians in the various denominations; but I do say that organized denominationalism, whether Eastern Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican, or Protestant, is neither spiritual nor Christian. There is no denominational organization in the world that can be said to be spiritual or Christian.

There must be no hedging. Christianity's cure of the scandal of denominationalism is a desperately needed call, for the world never so needed Christ as it does to-day. The fact is that none of the churches is Christian. Therefore, all that I have sought to say may be summed up in a single sentence: All of our churches must become genuinely Christian; then, and not until then, shall we have the united church of Christ.

But it will take a thousand years before a united Christendom can produce its best fruit. It has been so with the nations of the world. Shakespeare, Bacon, and Newton had back

[8] Charles Guignebert, *Christianity, Past and Present.*

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of them fully a thousand years of English history; as had Goethe, Kant, and Bach as many years of German history back of them; as had Voltaire, Montaigne, and Hugo as many years of French history back of them; and it was a thousand years after the Jews became an organized nation that Jesus of Nazareth was born.

Here is his church, with nearly two thousand years back of it, scandalized by a denominationalism that denies Christian brotherhood to the world and so conceals Christ as to make him one of the obscure characters of history. Our denominational programs when purely denominational become crumpled paper beneath the Cross of Christ, mingling with the dice which the Roman soldiers cast for his garments. Christ must be free and, therefore, the scandal of denominationalism must be abolished in order that the church may fulfill its purpose in the world.

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